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The Relationship Between Middle School Teachers' Perceptions of Principals' Transformational Leadership Practices, Teachers' Sense of Efficacy and Student Achievement

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The University of Southern Mississippi

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS
OF PRINCIPALS' TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES,
TEACHERS' SENSE OF EFFICACY AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

by

Antwane LaJacques Nelson

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

August 2012

ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PRINCIPALS' TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES, TEACHERS' SENSE OF EFFICACY AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

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The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between middle school teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational school leadership practices, teacher efficacy and student achievement. The study also investigated which transformational school leadership dimensions were predictors for teachers' sense of efficacy factors and student achievement as measured by math and reading/English language arts CRCT scores. Analyses were also conducted to determine which teacher sense of efficacy factors were predictors for student achievement as measured by math and reading/English language arts CRCT scores.

Data from 256 teacher surveys were collected from 17 middle schools located in a northwestern suburban school district in a southeastern state. Descriptive and statistical analysis indicated that teachers perceived high performance expectations as the most important transformational leadership dimension. A Pearson's correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between the six transformational leadership dimensions and each of the three teacher sense of efficacy factors. All correlations indicated a statistical significance, but reported weak relationships between the variables.

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to address the three research questions and to test the null hypotheses. The results of the regression models reported

correlations between the predictor variables and the outcome variables. Individualized support emerged as the best predictor for efficacy for classroom management. Vision emerged as the best predictor for the math CRCT scores and vision and group goals emerged as the best predictor for the reading/English language arts CRCT scores. Efficacy for classroom management emerged as the best predictor for math and reading/English language arts CRCT scores.

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A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Studies Office
of The University of Southern Mississippi
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for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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August 2012

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the loving memory of my mother, Rachel M. Nelson. I hope that she is smiling down upon my efforts and that she is truly pleased with all of my achievements and accomplishments..... I miss you so much Ma.

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I acknowledge the members of my Dissertation Committee, Dr. Rose McNeese, Dr. James T. Johnson, Dr. Ronald Styron, Dr. David Lee, and Dr. Thelma Roberson for your direction, assistance, guidance and most of all your commitment throughout the doctoral degree process. Thank you so much Dr. McNeese for serving as committee chair and offering your leadership and support. A special note of appreciation is offered to Dr. James T. Johnson for making the statistical concepts so clear and comprehensible. My sincere thanks go to University of Toronto, Dr. Kenneth Leithwood and The College of William and Mary, Dr. Megan Tschannen-Moran, for granting me permission to use their surveys in this research study.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

The innovation of federal legislation and educational policies such as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) marks the advent of austere accountability measures in education. In an attempt to combat some of the problems that plague this nation's educational system, law makers, educators and stakeholders have developed a complex system of solutions that ultimately hold school principals and teachers accountable for improving student achievement. In the wake of these recent authorizations, school restructuring, changes in educational policies and educational reform, principals are uncertain of their ability to shape school culture, create conducive educational climates and milieus that may affect student achievement.

According to Gulbin (2008) the concept of school reform to improve student achievement is a challenging task, but attempting to improve student academic performance in schools with large groups of students that are considered difficult to educate, is a daunting task. However, some schools have been successful in improving student performance despite the challenges. In addition to principals, teachers are also beginning to question their ability to contribute to the improvement of student achievement. Undoubtedly, teachers are the most important school resource and the connection to student achievement (Griffin, 2009) and research recognizes that teaching quality is the most dominant factor in determining student success and contends that effective teaching coupled with effective principal leadership can contribute to improving student performance. While scholars debate the facts surrounding the contributions that

teachers make to student achievement, a great amount of research indicates that a relationship exists between teacher efficacy, student performance outcomes and leadership styles (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). Teacher efficacy is the belief that a teacher has in their ability to have a positive effect on student achievement (Ashton, 1985). This concept is multi-dimensional, but theoretically, this concept asserts that student achievement is directly affected by the teacher's confidence level and self assurance in their skills, abilities, effectiveness and willingness to meet challenging situations (Griffin, 2009).

Statement of the Problem

The main objective for educators is to improve student achievement for all learners, a challenging goal that is articulated by the school principal in their role as the instructional leader. Principals are charged with improving the academic performance of all students by monitoring instruction, curriculum, and analyzing students' progress. One highly debated topic that has created a challenge to improving student achievement is socioeconomic status or student poverty, a factor that schools do not have control over. In the North American educational system, student poverty is frequently determined by the student's ability to qualify for the free and/or reduced priced lunch program. The challenge to improve the academic performance of all students' at some schools has been compounded and complicated by the demographic differences of students. In particular, students' that have been identified as economically disadvantaged are recognized as students that are a challenge to educate (Gulbin, 2008). However, with the implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) schools are expected to improve student performance despite the challenging populations they serve.

School districts and local schools across the United States are confronted with the question of how to improve the academic performance of students in high poverty schools and despite this challenge there are local schools that have shown improvement and gains in student achievement. Research illustrates, as seen in an article review by Reeves (2003), that high academic achievement of students in schools with large numbers of economically disadvantaged students is attainable. According to the information presented by the Reeves (2003) article these schools are referred to as 90/90/90 schools and have the following characteristics:

1. More than 90% of the students are eligible for free and reduced lunch, a commonly used surrogate for low-income families.
2. More than 90% of the students are from ethnic minorities.
3. More than 90% of the students met or achieved high academic standards, according to independently conducted tests of academic achievement. (p. 2)

The data from the 90/90/90 studies, as presented in Reeves article, suggests that there are certain consistent educational practices that contribute to the academic success of high poverty schools. Parallel to these studies are the attempts by researchers to examine the leadership practices that school principals need to be successful in improving student achievement in high poverty schools (Gulbin, 2008).

While there is evidence that teacher efficacy has a direct link to student achievement, research studies suggest that principal leadership is not directly linked to student achievement, but rather is indirectly related. In a study conducted by Ross and Gray (2006b), the researchers state that “principals, regardless of the student populations

they serve, are held accountable for student achievement in their schools. However, research reviews find that the direct effect of principals on student achievement is near zero” (p. 799). Principals indirectly influence student achievement through the skills, abilities and effectiveness of teachers. Evidence from research show that there is a correlation between the principal’s leadership style and teacher efficacy, the implication is that principals’ leadership practices can play a key role in influencing teacher efficacy, thus creating work environments that may affect teacher performance and commitment to the organization, which may ultimately have an influence on student achievement. Leithwood and Riehl (2003) contend that “leadership has significant effects on student learning, second only to the effects of the quality of curriculum and teachers’ instruction” (p. 4). While this premise of school leadership research is comparable to other studies on the topic, it contradicts the works of Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) who contended that school-level leadership directly impacts student achievement.

There are numerous educational leadership styles that purport to be the most appropriate for improving student achievement in the wake of the recent authorizations, school restructuring, changes in educational policies and educational reform. However in recent years, research reviews find that transformational school leadership appears to have the greatest direct influence on teacher efficacy and an indirect affect on student achievement. Ross and Gray (2006b) state that “teachers in schools characterized by transformational principal behaviors are more likely than teachers in other schools to express satisfaction with their principal, report that they exert extra effort, and be more committed to the organization and to improving it” (p. 798).

Seemingly, education is moving toward a level of uncertainty, but in the midst of budget constraints, mandates, policy changes, stern accountability measures and other challenges to the education system, educators are expected to improve and sustain student performance outcomes through direct and indirect means. The principals' role and the style of leadership that they may employ is an important element in meeting the challenges, demands and expectations of students, teachers, parents, policymakers and other stakeholders (Cotton, 2003; Ross & Gray, 2006a). Therefore it is essential that principals understand the relationship that exist between their leadership practices, teacher efficacy, and the affect on student achievement.

A review of the literature suggests that nominal research has been conducted to examine or explore the influence of principal's transformational school leadership practices on student achievement through teacher efficacy at middle schools. In an effort to determine the existence or nonexistence of this phenomenon this study explores the middle school teachers' perceptions of principals' transformational school leadership practices and the teachers' sense of efficacy concept at the middle school level.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship that exists between middle school teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational school leadership practices, teacher efficacy and student achievement. The results from this study will be used to provide insight about transformational school leadership and the factors that influence student achievement through teacher efficacy. This study attempted:

1. To explore the relationship exists between middle school teachers' perceptions of principal's transformational school leadership practices and the teacher's sense of efficacy.
2. To explore the relationship between middle school teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational school leadership practices and the influence of those practices on student achievement, as measured by student scores on the state CRCT.
3. To explore the relationship between the teachers' sense of efficacy and the influence it has on student achievement, as measured by student scores on the state CRCT.

Undeniably teacher quality is an important factor in student achievement and most argue that good teachers contribute to the improvement of student academic performance outcomes. However, Peagler (2003) reported that in the recent years teachers have struggled with the self-assurance that they have the capacity to improve student's learning and achievement. In an era of uncertainty where educational leaders are faced with meeting the challenges of school reform, restructuring, and budget constraints, it is important to explore the roles school principals play and the actions and/or leadership practices they employ to influence teachers' sense of self efficacy. Peagler (2003) stated:

Transformational forms of leadership are well suited to address these challenges because there is potential for building high levels of commitment to changing the complex nature of restructuring the educational agenda, and for fostering growth

in the capabilities that school staff needs to develop to respond in a productive manner to the school restructuring agenda. (pp. 5–6)

This leadership construct served as the contextual lens for this study of principals' transformational leadership practices and the influence these practices have on student achievement through teacher efficacy.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The advent of educational reform, restructuring and accountability brings challenges to the field of education. Despite the many challenges, principals and teachers are charged with improving student achievement. However, in the recent years teachers have struggled with their self-assurance, sense of self-worth, and confidence in their capacity to improve student achievement. Despite the various challenges, research suggests a link between teachers' actions and student performance outcomes: therefore, it is essential that principals understand what unique role that their leadership practices may play in influencing teacher efficacy and influencing student achievement. This study was guided by the following research questions and hypotheses:

1. If there is a relationship between middle school teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational school leadership practices and the teacher's sense of efficacy, which transformational leadership dimensions are associated with teacher efficacy?

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between middle school teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational leadership practices and the teacher's sense of efficacy.

2. If there is a relationship between middle school teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational school leadership practices and student achievement, as measured by student scores on the CRCT, which transformational school leadership dimensions best predict student achievement?

H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between middle school teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational leadership practices and student achievement, as measured by student scores on the CRCT.

3. If there is a relationship between the teachers' sense of efficacy factors and student achievement, as measured by student scores on the CRCT, which factors best predict student achievement?

H_{03} : There is no significant relationship between the teachers' sense of efficacy factors and student achievement, as measured by scores on the CRCT.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions were used for the purpose of this study:

Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) – For the purpose of this study CRCTs are state mandated achievement test for students in grades one through eight used to measure students' comprehension of the competencies taught in the state curriculum. This assessment provides assurance that students are learning at their grade level and presents data to teachers, schools and school districts to assist in making better instructional decisions, the results provide information about the academic achievement of students, schools and school systems, the data is further used to identify strengths and

areas of improvement. The CRCT also satisfies the accountability requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (Georgia Department of Education, 2011).

Economically Disadvantaged Students – For the purpose of this study students whose families have a low income and are eligible to participate in the federally funded free or reduced school lunch program are referred to as economically disadvantaged students (Gulbin, 2008).

Efficacy or self efficacy - Efficacy refers to an individual's judgments of their own capabilities to organize and execute a course of action required to attain designated types of performances (Bandura, 1986).

Idealized influence - A leader has idealized influence when he articulates a vision and fosters a sense of pride among the organizations members and earns their respect and trust (Bass, 1997; 1990b; Yammarino, 1994).

Individualized consideration - This term refers to the leader offering individualized attention to members and considers their needs, capabilities and desires (Bass, 1990b; 1997; Yammarino, 1994).

Inspirational motivation - A leader demonstrates inspirational motivation when he sets high standards for members, but offers encouragement and hopefulness for the achievement of set goals (Bass, 1990b; 1997; Yammarino, 1994).

Intellectual stimulation - A leader intellectually stimulates others by encouraging the contribution of their ideas and their participation in the decision making process (Bass, 1990b; 1997; Yammarino, 1994).

Leadership – For the purpose of this study leadership refers to the process in which an individual influences and solicits the support of others to accomplish a common

goal or task (Bass, 1990b; Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy, 1999; Katz & Kahn, 1966; Nahavandi, 2003; Rost, 1991; Tannenbaum, Weschler, & Massarik, 1961).

Leadership style, behavior and practices – Used interchangeably, these terms refers to the manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people (Cherry, n.d.; Edwards, 2008).

Principal Leadership Questionnaire (PLQ)— Principal Leadership Questionnaire (PLQ), designed by Jantzi and Leithwood (1996), will be used to collect data on the teachers' perceptions of their of principal's transformational school leadership practices in six identified dimensions. The six dimensions or factors of the PLQ include:

1. Identifying and articulating a vision,
2. Providing an appropriate model,
3. Fostering the acceptance of group goals,
4. Providing individualized support,
5. Providing intellectual stimulation, and
6. Holding high performance expectations.

Middle school – For the purpose of this study middle school refers to a school at a level between elementary and high school that includes the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade levels (Mees, 2008).

Student achievement – For the purpose of this study, student achievement in middle school refers the academic excellence of students based on the performance of the school as a whole on the CRCT in the areas of reading, English/language arts and mathematics. Performance is reported as: Meets Standard, Does Not Meet Standard, and Exceeds Standard (Georgia Department of Education, 2011).

Teacher sense of efficacy – For the purpose of this study a teacher’s sense of efficacy is based on the belief that he has in his ability to have a positive effect on student achievement (Ashton, 1985; Hoy, 2000). In this study, teacher sense of efficacy will be measured by the following factors taken from the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale: Efficacy in Student Engagement, Efficacy in Instructional Strategies and Efficacy in Classroom Management (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk, 2001).

Title I distinguished school – Schools that meet or exceed adequate yearly progress (AYP) standards for three or more consecutive years are classified as Title I distinguished Schools (National Title I Association, 2011).

Title I program – Title I is a federally funded program and part of the No Child Left Behind Act. It provides funding to school districts and public schools with high percentages of at risk students and students living in poverty. The overall purpose of the program is to improve educational opportunities for poor students (U.S. Department of Education, Planning and Evaluation Services, 2001).

Title I schools – For the purpose of this study middle schools identified as Title I are institutions where at least 40% of the students in the school are from low-income families. This is determined by the number of students that are eligible to receive free and reduced-price lunch (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

Transformational leadership - Transformational leadership refers to the leader’s practices that seek to change individuals and an organization through motivation and inspiration. Transformational leadership attempts to transform others by: getting followers to understand the importance of what they are being asked to do; getting followers to concentrate on what is beneficial for the organization, not one’s own selfish

goals; getting followers to aspire to function at high levels of performance. This study employs Leithwood's (1992, 1993a, 1993b, 1994) transformational school leadership construct which seeks to help school personnel develop and maintain a collaborative and professional culture, encourage teacher development, and assist teachers in solving problems.

Delimitations

The following delimitations were applied to this study:

1. The study focused only on middle schools.
2. This study focused on teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational leadership practices and teacher sense of efficacy in middle schools located in a large school district located in the Southeastern region of the United States.
3. Teachers participating in the study taught at their current school for at least two academic school years.

Assumptions

The researcher assumed that all participants responded honestly and accurately to the survey instruments utilized in the study to collect their responses.

Significance of the Study

In an attempt to combat some of the problems that plague the nation's educational system, law makers, educators and stakeholders have developed a complex system of solutions that ultimately hold school leaders and teachers accountable for student achievement. According to Boyett (2009), the advent of these austere accountability measures in education has created a growing interest and focus on educational leadership.

Since the educational leader is considered vital to the success of the educational institution, it is the challenge of the twenty-first century educational leader to provide and promote learning environments that are rich with learning opportunities for everyone within their educational community. (Boyett, 2009, p. 30)

There have been numerous of research studies that have examined the various leadership styles, characteristics, and aptitudes of school principals, but few studies have explored the details of middle school teacher's perceptions of principals' transformational leadership practices and the relationship to student achievement. This study is particularly important and timely because its findings will add to the body of knowledge addressing educational leadership issues related to the influence that principal's leadership practices have on student achievement. This study is expected to explore and identify specific transformational school leadership practices of middle school principals and the influence these practices have on teacher efficacy and on student achievement.

Summary

Chapter I presented an introduction to the topics relevant to this study which include: school restructuring, school leadership, teacher efficacy, and student achievement. This introductory chapter included the statement of the problem and the specific purpose of the study. In addition, this chapter identified the significance of the study as well as its essential research questions, hypotheses, definition of terms, assumptions and delimitations. Chapter II provides an overview of the theoretical framework and includes a review of the literature that details the definition of leadership, leadership theories, leadership behaviors/styles, educational leadership and self-efficacy.

In addition chapter II reviews the literature specific to the conceptual framework of transformational school leadership and teacher self-efficacy.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The review of literature for this study is organized into five major sections: definition of leadership, leadership theories, leadership behaviors/styles, educational leadership and efficacy. The first three sections define leadership and provide an overview of the major leadership theories. In addition, this chapter discusses the major leadership styles including transactional and transformational leadership. The fourth section details educational leadership and the impact that school reform, which includes the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) mandate, has had on this field of study. This section further describes factors that have been found in the review of literature, concerning school reform and the impact of its policies on school leadership, Title I schools and educating the economically disadvantaged student and the role of the principal. This section also includes information on transformational school leadership. Section five reviews the literature and research findings on the self efficacy construct of the social cognitive theory and provides an overview of teacher efficacy; its connection to transformational leadership and student achievement. The theoretical framework for this study is based on the transformational leadership theory, developed through the works of Burns (2010) and expanded by the presumptions of Bass (1985, 1990a, 1990b, 1997) and Leithwood (1992, 1993a, 1993b, 1994). In addition, this study employs concepts based on Bandura's (1986) theory of social cognitive learning and self efficacy.

Theoretical Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is grounded in Leithwood's (1992) theory of transformational leadership in education and Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory and his construct of self efficacy. In recent years transformational leadership has been accepted as the preferred leadership style to assist principals in responding to the challenging changes in education that include but not limited to: educational accountability, school reform, student achievement, teacher self efficacy, teacher job satisfaction, school climate and school culture. According to Leithwood transformational leadership employs facilitative influence that assists principals in managing the changes necessary to meet the various challenges. Leithwood equates the current phenomena of educational reform and restructuring to the paradigm shifts that occurred in the 1970's and early 1980's, in the large corporations. During this era major businesses moved from a centralized power and top-down decision making process to a facilitative and shared decision approach. In education this translates to the shift from traditional school methods where the principal is seen only as an instructional leader, to a progressive approach where the principal is seen as an transformational leader that assist teachers in finding meaning and commitment in their work for the benefit of their students.

A review of the literature suggests that teacher efficacy, is based on Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory. The social cognitive theory was popularized by psychologist Bandura and this behavioral psychology construct theorizes how individuals attempt to manage certain aspects of their lives, essential to this theory is the concept of self-efficacy (Howard, 2003). Bandura (1997) defines self-efficacy as "one's capabilities

to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (p. 3). Emerging from Bandura’s works is the concept of teacher sense efficacy which is similarly defined to Bandura’s definition of self-efficacy, as the belief that a teacher has in their ability to have a positive effect on student achievement (Ashton, 1985). In an interview Anita Woolfolk (Shaughnessy, 2004) describes teachers’ self-efficacy as how teachers view of their own ability to cultivate and promote student achievement.

Definition of Leadership

A review of the literature on leadership indicates that over the past decades, there have been countless definitions offered for leadership. Bass (1990b) indicates that the need to understand this phenomenon has caused researchers and scholars in the field to become preoccupied in defining what it is leadership. Scholars in the field of leadership studies disagree on what constitutes leadership, however Bass (1990b) suggested that the definition for leadership should be based on where the phenomenon of leadership is occurring. Therefore, the concept of leadership can differ in the corporate, political or educational environments nonetheless certain underpinning leadership philosophies are be common regardless of the discipline.

The differences in the definition of leadership have led researchers to examine its diverging characteristics (Hughes et al., 1999). Over the years there have been attempts to offer a universal definition which is impossible to do, due to the enormous number of disciplines that exist. Rost (1991) asserts that because researchers and practitioners have been incapable of clearly delineating what leadership is, the term has become ambiguous and the observable fact, difficult to recognize when it is occurring. Since there is no precise or demarcated definition of leadership, the action often gets misconstrued and

misabeled as some other type of persuasive collective process (Bass, 1990b). Kouzes and Posner (2007) suggested that leadership is a skill set that should not be shrouded in mystery, but should be recognizable and functional across disciplines.

Despite the plethora of definitions and disagreements Bass (1990b), Hughes et al. (1999), Nahavandi (2003), and Rost (1991) contended that most definitions of leadership have three commonalities: first, leadership is a group occurrence that involves leaders and followers; second, influence and persuasion are often used by leaders, as a means to guide people toward a desired goal; and third, the presence of a leader indicates some form of formal or informal structure. Johns and Moser (1989) referenced the works of several leading authorities on the subject of organizational leadership and leadership theory and in *The Social Psychology of Organizations*, Katz and Kahn (1966) described leadership as a way of influencing an issue that is important to an organization. Similarly, the works of Tannenbaum et al. (1961) further defines leadership “as an interpersonal influence, exercised in situations and directed, through the communication process, toward the attainment of a specified goal or goals” (p. 24). Howard’s (2005) definition views leadership as a process of communication that includes motivating, supporting and guiding. Well-known authority on leadership, Warren Bennis (as cited in Howard, 2005) stated that:

Leaders of effective groups have four characteristics in common. First they provide direction and meaning to the people they are leading. The leaders are responsible for keeping team members aware of important stated goals and objectives. Second, they generate trust. They act in an honest manner that creates and environment of trust. Third, they prefer action and risk taking. They are

willing to operate outside of the safety circle of tradition. Fourth, they are communicators of hope. Using effective communication skill, leaders encourage others to believe that the expected behavior will result in successful realization of stated goal. (p. 385)

Findings from the review of the literature on the definition of leadership coincides with the works of Bass (1990b), Hughes et al. (1999), Nahavandi (2003), and Rost (1991) and reveals at least two common themes found throughout the many definitions for leadership. These common themes are found in a comprehensive, though not universal, definition offered by Roach and Behling (1984) which defined leadership as a method used to inspire individuals and or a group to achieve personal and or group objectives. Most importantly, leadership involves an interaction or relationship between the individual and or group members (followers) and the leader who acts as a change agent (Bass, 1990b).

Leadership Concepts

Leadership plays a critical role in the success or failure of an organization, and as a result the need to assess and understand leadership is continuing to grow. This growing interest in the study leadership began in the early 1900's. Prior to this era, theories on leadership focused on the characteristics or traits that separated leaders from followers (Johns & Moser, 1989). This focus proved to be too narrow in its scope, thus it was concluded that characteristics and traits did not differentiate leaders from followers (Cherry, n. d.; Menedez-Morse, 1992). Later theories examined measures that could potentially have had an impact on leadership, for example certain situations and leadership capacity. Often referred to as situational leadership, this theory explored the

many intricacies of leadership, but was considered inadequate because it could not offer a hypothesis as to which leadership skills were best suited for specific circumstances (Cherry, n. d.; Menedez-Morse, 1992). As the need to understand leadership increased, numerous of diverging leadership theories appeared and was routinely categorized into one of the main classifications of leadership theories identified by Cherry (n. d.):

1. *Great Man Theories.* Researchers and scholars that study this leadership premise theorize that leadership ability is an innate skill set that effective leaders are born with. Personality and character traits were found to be essential to leadership (Cherry, n. d.; Edwards, 2008).
2. *Trait Theories.* Akin to the great man theories, the trait theory approach believes that individuals are born with specific character traits that are suited for leadership. Subsequently, this concept theorized that individuals that possessed these specific characteristics and qualities had the potential to be effective leaders (Cherry, n. d.).
3. *Contingency Theories.* The contingency theory of leadership assumes that the capacity for leadership is dependent on the various dynamics of a situation, which can include the style of leadership being employed. This theory parallels the situational theory of leadership and presumes that there is no one right leadership style (Cherry, n. d.).
4. *Situational Theories.* Theorists subscribing to this concept presume that effective leadership occurs based upon situations or circumstances. Edwards (2008) and Cherry (n. d.) writes that the type of leadership that is needed in an organization is determined by situational variables and the needs of the

organization. Similar to the contingency theory, this theoretical approach believes that the capacity for leadership requires the use of different leadership styles/behaviors to address certain decision-making issues.

5. *Behavioral Theories.* Behavioral theories of leadership assume that individuals can learn how to become leaders. This approach rejects the theories that contend effective leadership is derived from innate qualities and character traits. The behavioral theory of leadership is based on behavioral psychology and looks at what the leaders do and how they behave toward the organizations followers. Researchers have studied the pattern of behavior for leaders and labeled them as leadership styles/behaviors (Cherry, n. d.).
6. *Participative Theories.* Through the participative leadership approach the leader attempts to solicit feedback from the organizations members and seeks to make them feel important by encouraging them to contribute and participate in the organizations decision-making. Consequently, participative theories of leadership assume that having the organizations members involved in the decision making process improves understanding and thus encourages commitment (Cherry, n. d.).
7. *Management Theories.* These theories of leadership are referred to as transactional theories and emphasize that organizations operate best based on a clear delineation of the roles of leaders and followers. Researchers that study this approach focus on the transactions or exchanges between leaders and followers which is undergirded by a system of rewards and consequences (Cherry, n. d.).

8. *Relationship Theories*. Referred to as the theory of transformational leadership, this approach attempts to explore the relationship between the leader and the follower. The study of transformational leadership theorizes that an organizations success is based on the leader's ability to motivate the members/followers through inspiration and aspiration, thus encouraging them to attain a specified goal or goals, which may result in a sense of self efficacy. The theory of transformational leadership corresponds to Roach's and Behling's (1984) description of leadership as a method used to inspire individuals and or a group to achieve personal and or group objectives (Cherry, n. d.).

Leadership Styles

Edwards (2008) noted that leadership behavior, style, is essential to the framework of an organization. Leadership styles have surged to the forefront of the research on leadership as organizations search for methods to motivate, inspire, support and encourage employee's commitment to the organization. Research finds that clear effective communication and the ability to persuade and influence others, are key factors to enhancing an individual's commitment to an organization. Autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership are considered to be the three major leadership behaviors/styles often found in organizations (Edwards, 2008). These three leadership styles were identified by Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1939) as they observed and studied the decision making process in groups of school aged children. Lewin et al. (1939) and his colleagues then examined how the children responded to the three different leadership styles.

Autocratic Leadership Style

Autocratic leaders, also called authoritarian leaders, are solely responsible for the decision making process in an organization and do not seek input from members. Communication is frequently one-way with the leader giving directives with the expectation that the followers will comply with all requests. While this style of leadership maybe best suited for situations where there is little time for the group decision making process, this approach could considerably affect the climate and or culture of an organization (Edwards, 2008). Edwards (2008) further explained that this style of leadership can stifle an employee's growth, development and commitment to an organization.

Democratic Leadership Style

Democratic leadership promotes shared decision making and encourages participation and input from the organization's members. Although the leader ultimately has the concluding authority in the decision making process, the organization's members feel motivated, empowered and are aware that the outcome of any decision is a result of their input (Edwards, 2008). The study conducted by Lewin et al. (1939) hypothesized that democratic leadership was the most effective leadership style. Although Lewin and his colleagues reported that democratic leadership was the most effective style in their study, Edwards (2008) revealed the shortcoming of this approach and shared that this leadership style can be time consuming, thus making it difficult to reach consensus on an issue.

Laissez-Faire Leadership Style

Laissez-faire leadership affords members of an organization, the opportunity and authority to decide on issues without the benefit of a leader's direction and/or guidance. Leaders merely share their vision and the objective(s) with the organization's members and delegate the responsibility of implementing the vision and meeting the goals to them. This style of leadership diminishes the leaders participation in the decision making process. With the leader's direct influence noticeably absent from the leader/follower relationship, the leader serves as contact between the members and other resources (Burns, 2010; Edwards, 2008).

Transactional and Transformational Leadership Style

In 1978 Burns (2010) introduced the transactional and transformational concepts to the study of leadership during his research on political leaders. These concepts were extended and applied to the organizational psychology works and research of Bass (1985) and his colleagues, who continued to examine the leader and follower relationship. Through the individual works of Bass (1985) and the combined research of Bass and Avolio (1993) the psychological framework of the transactional and transformational leadership constructs were explored. Through their research Bass and Avolio (1993) were able to determine that the transformational leadership style was most often employed by leaders. This research led to the development of the "full range of leadership" model which was an extension of the transformational leadership style. Bass's (1985) research on transformational leadership was principally performed in educational, industrial and military organizations and differs in the context in which Burns (2010) studied the transformational approach to leadership.

On transactional leadership Burns (2010) hypothesized that in the field of leadership:

The relations of most leaders and followers are transactional where leaders approach followers with an eye to exchange one thing for another: jobs for votes, or subsidies for campaign contributions. Such transactions comprise the bulk of the relationships among leaders and followers, especially in groups, legislatures, and parties (p. 4).

The relationships that Burns refers to are usually based on an equal exchange of something of value (Yukl, 1981). This approach to leadership is based on the transactions or exchanges between the leader and follower. The leader takes on the role of manager and engages workers in a relationship that focuses on transactions or exchanges. In order to acquire something of value each party must be willing to give something of value. Leaders promise to reward workers based on their job performance and compliance. Central to this style of leadership is the system of rewards and punishment as a motivating force (Bass, 1990a). According to Burns (2010) these rewards may include various monetary incentives, advancements, awards, praise and commendations. Bass (1997) commented that there are four qualities of the transactional leadership approach:

1. Contingent Reward: Leaders exchange promises of rewards for workers effort, compliance and good performance.
2. Active Management by Exception: Leader enforces policy and regulations and takes action when there is noncompliance.

3. Passive Management by Exception: Leaders penalize workers for failure to complete performance tasks.
4. Laissez-Faire: Leaders are absent from the decision making process (p. 134).

Transactional leadership is based on the interaction of exchanges between leaders and followers. This approach to leadership defines the leader's role as managerial, in which the leader focuses on managing the operations of the organization. The transactional leader works to create a structure that clearly defines the roles and expectations of the followers, these roles and expectations are monitored through a system of positive and negative reinforcements to insure that the desired performance tasks are met (Bass, 1985). Simply, transactional leadership is based on the follower's willingness to comply with what the leader requires in exchange for monetary rewards, advancement or praise (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003).

Transformational leadership began with James McGregor Burns in 1978. Burns's work on organizational leadership researched the leadership styles of political leaders and corporate executives. The underpinning theory of Burns's work was that the leader is a promoter of altruism, encouragement, inspiration, motivation and therefore enhances the work performance of the organization's members (Liontos, 1992). Burns (2010) stated that "the transforming leader looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs and engages the full person of the follower" (p. 4). Tichy and Devanna (1986) described seven character traits of transformational leaders that include: change agent; courageous individual; belief in people; value driven; lifelong learner; ability to deal with complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty; and visionary. Lashway (1995) defined transformational leadership as a leadership model that encourages and inspires others to

incorporate an unselfish attitude when focusing on the needs and goals of the organization.

Bass (1990a; 1990b) reveals that leaders identified as transformational are considered highly effective leaders and contribute more to an organization, due to their relationships and influence on workers, than those described as transactional leaders. Avery (2004) postulated that the performance of workers is enhanced when their leaders approach is transformational. A review of the literature on transformational leadership finds research that indicates that employees in organizations are more likely to exert additional effort for transformational leaders than they are for transactional leaders. According to Bass (1990b) a study of 228 employees and 58 managers in a large firm was conducted to be evidence for the effect that transformational leadership had on employee effort.

For this study the effect of transformational leadership was compared to with transactional leadership. Managers were placed in order according to their leadership factor score taking from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). In this study the MLQ classified leaders as four-star if their score fell within the top 25% on a leadership factor score. Results of the study indicated that 75% to 82% of the managers identified as four-star transformational leaders had workers that exerted more effort on their jobs, than the 60% to 58% of managers identified as four star transactional leaders.

According to Bass (1985) the effectiveness of the transformational approach to leadership is determined by the influence that a leader has on the organization's followers. This level of influence is measured by observing the follower's motivation and performance. In an effort to attain a desired outcome, transformational leaders seek

to empower, inspire, motivate, and encourage followers while simultaneously transforming their cognitive behavior or thought processes. Yammarino (1994) explained that empowering individuals and transforming the way that they think about themselves, or their self efficacy, is a challenge for this styles of leadership. In an attempt to overcome this challenge, the following methods are frequently used in the transformational approach to transform followers: getting followers to understand the importance of what they are being asked to do; getting followers to concentrate on what is beneficial for the organization, not one's own selfish goals; and getting followers to aspire to function at high levels of performance (Bass, 1985).

Yukl (1981) wrote that the primary focus of the transformational approach to leadership is the advancement of the organization. This was accomplished through the leader's capacity to foster a sense of commitment and hope among the followers to attain the established goals of the organization. Bass (1990b; 1997) and Yammarino (1994) posits that transformational leadership contains the following four set of behaviors referred to as the four I's to assist in building follower commitment to organizational goals: (a) Idealized Influence (Charisma): Leader articulates a vision and fosters a sense of pride among the organization's members and earns their respect and trust; (b) Inspirational Motivation: Leader sets high standards for members, but offers encouragement and hopefulness for the achievement of set goals; (c) Intellectual Stimulation: Leaders encourages the contribution of ideas and the participation in the decision making process; and (d) Individualized Consideration: Leader offers individualized attention to members and considers their needs, capabilities and desires. These behaviors were measured with the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)

which is an 80 question survey designed to analyze leadership behaviors and characteristics of a transformational leader. Bass's concept of transformational leadership centers on the development of an organization's members, advancement of the organization and the overall growth and development of both groups.

Educational Leadership

Educational Reform

The innovation of federal legislation and educational policies such as the reauthorization in 2001 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), also known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), marks the advent of austere accountability measures in education. According to Muhammad (2009) this legislation marks "the first time in U.S. history, schools would be judged based upon student outcomes, not educator intentions" (p. 9). In an attempt to combat some of the problems that plague the nation's educational system, law makers, educators and stakeholders have developed a complex system of solutions that ultimately hold school principals and teachers accountable for student and school wide academic achievement. Muhammad (2009) notes that this legislative act, which focuses on high standards and measurable goals to improve student achievement, required that all students be able to demonstrate a level of proficiency in reading and mathematics by 2014. Muhammad (2009) reported since the inception of NCLB minor steps have been made toward narrowing the academic achievement gap. As a result of this federal mandate, schools became solely responsible for student achievement despite the uncontrollable factors that may impact success or failure.

Recently the President of the United States and the United States Department of Education has worked to provide states and local school districts with some support and

flexibility in implementing the mandates of NCLB (U. S. Department of Education, 2001). An overview of the ESEA reauthorization on the U. S. Department of Education (2012) webpage stated that:

The U. S. Department of Education is inviting each State educational agency (SEA) to request flexibility on behalf of itself, its local educational agencies, and schools, in order to better focus on improving student learning and increasing the quality of instruction. This voluntary opportunity will provide educators and State and local leaders with flexibility regarding specific requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive State – developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction.

Through these measures of relief and support state and local school districts may request waivers regarding the school improvement and accountability requirements of NCLB.

“States, districts, and schools will receive relief from a system that over-identifies schools as “failing” and prescribes a “one size fits all” approach to interventions” (White House, 2011).

In the wake of these recent authorizations and changes in educational policies teachers, who are undoubtedly the most important school resource and the connection to student outcomes (Griffin, 2009), are beginning to question their ability to contribute and influence student achievement. Even though some research suggests that what educational leaders do has no direct affect on student achievement, principals are still held accountable for the success and failure of all the students they serve (Ross & Gray,

2006b). A claim that has been refuted by Marzano et al. (2005) study on the impact of school leaders on student achievement where the authors found a significant relationship between school leadership and student achievement. Muhammad (2009) argues that schools are not traditionally intended to evaluate students aptitudes based wholly on the outcome of a standardized assessment, nevertheless, that is what is being requested. The preoccupation with accomplishing mandated objectives has taken away the teacher's ability to focus on the development of each student and the school leader's ability to focus on the development of the teacher. Muhammad (2009) identified this trepidation as compliance mentality and it has caused schools to do whatever it takes to avoid the appearance of failure, even cheating. Teacher evaluations tools used by school systems now reflect an interest in the efforts of the teacher rather than the student's comprehension of the standards and mastery of the curriculum. The impact of high stakes accountability measures have resulted in teachers questioning their effectiveness in the classroom, their instructional delivery and their ability to influence student achievement. Stewart (2006) stated that:

School reform and accountability movements pressure school principals to improve student achievement, yet little information is provided on best practices for achieving this. Numerous accountability schemes are exclusively based on high-stakes standardized testing, which is typically incongruent with what most educators recognize as effective ways of measuring quality teaching and learning.

(p. 7)

Title I

Title I is one of the largest federally funded program in the United States that has provided funding to improve the student achievement of low income students. Created in 1965 as a result of President Johnson's "War on Poverty" campaign, Title I was a component of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and since its inception the program's purpose has not changed since. "To ensure equal educational opportunity for all children regardless of socioeconomic background and to close the achievement gap between poor and affluent children, by providing additional resources for schools serving disadvantaged students" (U.S. Department of Education, Planning and Evaluation Services, 2001, p. 2). In 1994 ESEA was reauthorized and was referred to as the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA). Changes in the policy were designed to improve instruction by coordinating the policies and resources with the reform efforts of the state and local school systems. According to Cook (2005) the 1994 reauthorization included an accountability piece to fortify the policy. With the advent of NCLB the accountability feature "requires Title I schools to show that low-income students are making strides in achievement through an increased emphasis on testing" (p. 26).

In the statement of purpose for ESEA the U. S. Department of Education (2004) stated that Title I and its funding was intended to "ensure that all children have a fair, equal and significant opportunity to obtain a high quality education and reach, at minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments". Title I funds are allocated to high poverty schools with at least 50% of their enrollment participating in the federal free and reduced breakfast and lunch

program. In 2004 the U.S. Department of Education, Planning and Evaluation Services wrote:

While the highest-poverty schools comprise 16 percent of all schools, they account for 46 percent of Title I spending. About three-fourths (73 percent) of Title I funds go to schools with 50 percent or more students eligible for free or reduced – price lunch. (p. 7)

How Title I funding is spent is the discretion of the local school, but funds can be employed for curriculum improvement, instructional needs, staffing needs or parental involvement, however local schools should ensure that the funding is used to meet the academic needs of the low income students. The delivery of Title I funds to the local schools adheres to an intricate process bound by a series of formulas that determines eligibility.

Principal Leadership

In this era of accountability and federal and state mandates on education, the main objective for educators is to improve student achievement, a challenging goal that is articulated by the school principal in their role as the instructional leader. Principals are charged with improving student achievement by monitoring the instructional delivery, the curriculum and analyzing the academic progress of students. The principal's role is critical in creating an environment conducive to student learning and increasing student performance outcomes. While there is evidence that teacher efficacy has a direct link to student achievement, research studies show that educational leadership is not directly linked to student achievement, but rather is indirectly linked (Leithwood, 2004). However, the actions and approaches that principals employ do affect the school

environment (Edwards, 2008). The focus of educational leadership is identified in Smith's and Piele's (2006) definition of school leadership as "the activity of mobilizing and empowering others to serve the academic and related needs of students with utmost skill and integrity" (p. 5). Leithwood (2004) suggested the most apparent forms of educational leadership that has an indirect impact on student achievement are observed in the roles of school board members, superintendents and principals. The actions of these individuals directly influence policies and procedures that govern and guide school districts, local schools, and classrooms all of which have some affect on student achievement (Leithwood, 2004).

The ordeal that most educational leaders encounter is being able to recognize individuals or opportunities that can aid in improving student achievement. Of the three groups mentioned, principals are in a better position to have a direct influence on teachers by developing trusting, committed and transforming relationships (Leithwood, 2004). Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson, 2010 indicated that there are several educational leadership variables that effect student achievement including: student/family background, school conditions, classroom conditions and teachers. The most compelling implication is "the breadth and depth of knowledge needed if leaders are to make significant contributions to student learning through their organizations..... If they are to be successful in improving learning for their students, they need to know where their efforts will have the biggest payoff" (Leithwood, 2004, pp. 6-7).

Cotton (2003) found that the majority of principal's efforts to impact student achievement were indirect and takes place through the teachers. He also affirmed that principals indirectly influence student achievement through the skills, abilities, and

effectiveness of teacher (Cotton, 2003). Further review of the literature finds that a relationship exists between the principal leadership styles, teacher efficacy and student achievement. The review of this literature contradicts the research findings of Marzano et al. (2005) who “found a statically significant correlation between school-level leadership and student achievement at .25” (Waters & Cameron, 2007, p. 3).

Marzano et al. (2005) conducted a meta-analysis of 69 studies to explore what the research said about school leadership and according to Waters and Cameron (2007) this research shows “clearly leadership makes a difference” (p. 3). As a result of their study Marzano et al. (2005) identified 21 behaviors they called *responsibilities* that had strong correlations to student achievement. The implication by Marzano and his colleagues, as well as other researchers and theorists, is that a principal’s approach to leadership can play an essential role in influencing student achievement whether it is directly or indirectly (Marzano et al., 2005).

Seemingly, education is moving toward a level of uncertainty, but in the midst of budget constraints, mandates, policy changes, stern accountability measures and other challenges to the education system, educators are expected to improve and sustain student performance outcomes through direct and indirect means. The principal’s role and approach to leadership is an important element in meeting the challenges, demands and expectations of students, teachers, parents, policymakers, and other stakeholders. Consequently, it is essential that principals understand the relationship that exist between their leadership style, teacher efficacy, and the affect on student achievement. According to Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) effective school leaders should do the following:

1. Create and sustain a competitive school: Leader must have the ability maintain a highly competitive educational program when an alternative to public education exists;
2. Empower others to make significant decisions: Essential to most effective leadership approaches this concepts builds commitment to attaining the organizations goals;
3. Provide instructional guidance: Leaders should have the ability to assist teachers in their professional development; and
4. Develop and implement strategic school improvement plans: Leaders should have the necessary skills to effectively plan and implement a school wide improvement plan to monitor student achievement. (p. 12)

There are numerous educational leadership styles that purport to be the most appropriate for improving student achievement. However instructional leadership and school transformational leadership are the most commonly used approaches used by educational leaders (Leithwood, 2004). Compared to other leadership styles, these approaches are different given that they are centered on how the educational leader and teacher collaborate to enhance the student learning process and improve student achievement. Essential to instructional leaders are the objectives of the school, instructional practices, school milieu and the instructional program, while transformational leaders work toward school improvement by improving the overall school culture (Stewart, 2006).

Instructional Leadership

A review of the literature (Stewart, 2006, pp. 6-7) suggested that the effective school movement of the early 1980s brought the upsurge of the instructional leadership approach. Instructional leadership explored how school leadership influenced the instructional process and student achievement. Principals focused their attentions on classroom instruction and what teachers were doing to insure that students were engaged in the learning process. In their role as instructional leaders, principals were viewed as the instructional experts and resources for teachers, but due to the multitude of functions that they are responsible for, principals do not have the capacity to serve exclusively as the instructional expert. Often criticized for a top down process of management, instructional leadership was believed to be an authoritarian approach to school leadership (Stewart, 2006).

Leithwood (2004) suggest that instructional leadership has become antiquated and a term that has been reduced to a slogan that reminds educational leaders what their focus should be. Smith and Andrews (as cited in Marzano et al., 2005) stated that there are four functions of an instructional leader which includes: resource provider, instructional resource, communicator and visible presence. As a resource provider the principal insures that teachers are properly equipped with the necessary materials and equipment to provide instruction. As an instructional resource the principal sustains and encourages all instructional activities. As a communicator the principal sets clear and attainable instructional goals and communicates those goals to all stakeholders. As a visible presence the principal regularly visits classrooms and is highly visible and accessible (p. 18).

Transformational Leadership in Education

Much of what is known about effective leadership in education has been modeled after corporate constructs, with the belief that it is the leader's prowess that influences change, enhances productivity and increases profitability (Barker, 2001). Similarly, in the field of educational leadership, researchers have established a relationship between leadership styles, teacher effectiveness and student achievement. Studies show that student achievement is affected by the teachers approach to the learning process, the schools milieu and the principal's approach to the teaching and learning process (Kelley, Thornton, & Daugherty, 2005). In addition to influencing student achievement, evidence suggests that the principal's leadership style can influence teachers' capacity toward teaching and have an indirect affect on student performance (Kelly et al., 2005).

According to Stewart (2006) the theory of leadership has become complicated over the past years with researchers and scholars debating the pros and cons of various leadership constructs, especially in the field of education. Johns and Moser (1989) propose that of the many different educational leadership models that currently exist, transformational leadership best illustrates the type of leadership that is needed to facilitate change, motivate, inspire and manage uncertainty in this era of educational restructuring and reform. Leithwood (2004) acknowledged that while there was little scientific research on transformational leadership in education, the construct appeared to be the most suitable leadership approach to meet the challenges that educational leaders are confronted with.

Leithwood (1992) suggested that in recent years instructional and transformational leadership have been accepted as preferred educational leadership styles,

but transformational leadership has been the more accepted preference when responding to the challenging changes in education that include, but not limited to: educational accountability, school reform, student achievement, teacher self efficacy, teacher job satisfaction, school climate, and school culture. Transformational leadership employs facilitative influence that assists principals in managing the changes necessary to meet the various challenges (Leithwood, 1992).

Leithwood (1992) equated the reform and restructuring in education to the paradigm shifts that occurred in the 1970s early 1980s, and early 1990s, in the large corporations. During this era major businesses moved from a centralized power and top-down decision making process to a facilitative and shared decision approach. In education this translated to the shift from traditional school methods where the principal is seen only as an instructional leader, to a progressive approach where the principal is seen as a transformational leader who assists teachers in finding a meaning and commitment in their work for the benefit of the students they teach.

Kirby, Paradise, and King (1992) suggested that transformational leadership is designed for organizations that are experiencing some type of change and looking to enhance the commitment of its members. One key factor for leaders utilizing this approach to leadership was to understand the importance of developing and enhancing the skills and abilities of the organization members and clearly recognizing the impact it has in promoting the growth and success of the organization.

A review of the literature on transformational school leadership found that principal's ability to advance teachers' sense of commitment to their job was essential to meeting the challenges put forth by the current educational mandates and reform policies,

which require consistent improvement in student academic achievement (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). According to Stronge, Richard and Catano (2008), supporting teachers' commitment to their jobs through effective transformational school leadership is one strategy that principals can employ to reduce undesirable teacher turnover and attrition.

Marzano et al. (2005) stated that the research studies of Burns (2010), Bass (1985), and Avolio (1999) have been expanded by Leithwood (1993b) to include the transformational approach for educational leadership. Bass (1985) postulated there were four aspects of transformational leadership and referred to them as the Four I's of transformational leadership: Individual consideration, Intellectual stimulation, Inspirational motivation and influence. Leithwood noted (as cited in Marzano et al., 2005) that, "the Four I's of transformational leadership identified by Bass and Avolio are necessary skills for school principals if they are to meet the challenges of the 21st century" (p. 15). One likely challenge facing principals is providing the needed support for teachers as they struggle with their capacity to affect the student learning process (Ashton, 1985). Leithwood (1993a) emphasized that transformational school leaders can advance the commitment of teachers by supporting their sense of self-worth, confidence, value and effectiveness.

Transformational school leadership described by Leithwood and Jantzi (1999, p. 6) included the following six elements: 1) Building school vision and goals; 2) Providing intellectual stimulation; 3) Offering individualized support; 4) Symbolizing professional practices and values; 5) Demonstrating high performance expectations; and 6) Developing structures to foster participation in school decisions.

Stewart (2006) suggested that Leithwood's model of educational leadership seeks to assist faculty and staff in: developing and shaping the school culture; assisting teachers in their efforts to work collaboratively to solve issues regarding the learning process; and assisting teachers in their professional growth and development. Studies cited by Stewart (2006) indicate that Leithwood's concept of transformational leadership has an influence on teacher commitment and this commitment is enhanced when teachers are aware of the connection between their pursuits and the objectives of the school (Hallinger, 2003). Leithwood's (1994) studies found that principals that used this style of leadership focused on increasing the capacity and or efficacy of their staff members.

Efficacy

Self Efficacy

A review of the literature suggests that teacher efficacy, is based on Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory. This behavioral psychology construct explains how individuals attempt to manage certain aspects of their lives. Essential to this theory is the concept of self-efficacy (Howard, 2003). Bandura (1986) delineated self-efficacy as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute course of action required to attain designated types of performances" (p. 391) and further explained that "people's level of motivation, affective states, and actions are based more on what they believe than on what is objectively true" (Bandura 1997, p. 2). Self efficacy is shaped by four sources which include mastery experiences, social models, social persuasion and psychological responses (Bandura, 1994). Bandura (1997) stated that the ideas of self-esteem and self efficacy are different concepts, where as self efficacy focuses on an individual's personal beliefs about their abilities, self-esteem looks at how an individual views their sense of worth. Bandura (1997) continued to say that:

There is no fixed relationship between beliefs about one's capabilities and whether one likes or dislikes oneself. Individuals may judge themselves hopelessly inefficacious in a given activity without suffering any loss of self-esteem whatsoever, because they do not invest their self-worth in that activity. (p. 11)

Teacher Sense of Efficacy and Student Achievement

Influenced by Bandura's (1997) theoretical model of self efficacy, teacher efficacy is the belief that a teacher has the ability to positively affect student achievement outcomes (Ashton, 1985). This concept is multi-dimensional, but theoretically, student achievement is directly influenced by the teacher's confidence level and self assurance in their skills, abilities, effectiveness and willingness to meet challenging situations (Griffin, 2009). In an interview Woolfolk (Shaughnessy, 2004) described teachers' self-efficacy for teaching as how teachers view their own ability to cultivate and promote student achievement. Research shows that teachers that have a high sense of teacher efficacy view themselves as effective and can find significance in their teaching capabilities. These teachers often have a positive attitude about their students, the parents, their colleagues and they appear to have a sense of control.

According to Bandura (1997) the way in which teachers view their capacity for teaching students has an influence on their instructional delivery, teaching methods and their belief that they can be effective. Teachers with low teacher efficacy tend to have a negative outlook on the educational process, but teachers with a high teacher efficacy see an opportunity to teach and reach all students (Bandura, 1997). High efficacious teachers believe in their capacity to teach all students despite the various challenges and student

learning issues and they pride themselves on their abilities to provide environments in which students can learn. A study that compared the classroom management styles of high efficacious teachers to low efficacious teachers revealed that teachers with a high sense of teacher efficacy focused most of their time on instructional activities, offered praise and academic support to their students. Conversely, low efficacious teachers believed that there was nothing that could be done to motivate the un-motivated student (Bandura, 1997).

Teacher Efficacy and Transformational Leadership

However in recent years, research reviews found that transformational leadership appeared to have the greatest direct influence on teacher efficacy and an indirect effect on student achievement. Ross and Gray (2006b) stated that teachers in schools with principals that employ transformational school leadership practices show a sense of contentment in their work environment and are committed to helping the school accomplish its desired goals and objectives. Ross and Gray (2006b) concluded that:

Transformational leadership had an impact on the collective teacher efficacy of the school; teacher efficacy alone predicted teacher commitment to community partnerships; and transformational leadership had direct and indirect effects on teacher commitment to school mission and commitment to professional learning community. (p. 179)

While scholars debate the facts surrounding the contributions that teachers make to the student learning process and student achievement, research indicates that a correlation exists between teachers' capabilities or efficacy and various components of transformational school leadership (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). In a study conducted by

Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) 2,290 teachers from 665 primary schools in England were surveyed. The researchers sought to test the effects of transformational school leadership practices on teachers, their classroom procedures and the improvement in student achievement. The results of this study pointed out that transformational school leadership had an effect on teachers' classroom procedures but did not have an effect on student achievement. As a part of the framework for their study, Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) hypothesized that it was the teachers' inspirations, competencies and working environments that directly influenced their classroom procedures. Results from this study further indicated that:

Transformational leadership had very strong direct effects on teachers work settings and motivation with weaker but still significant effects on teachers' capacities..... Transformational leadership had a moderate and significant effect on teachers' classroom practices. This effect was not as strong as either teacher capacity (the strongest effect) or teacher motivation but it was substantially stronger than teachers' work settings. (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006, p. 223)

Evidence from a study conducted by Hipp (1997) suggested that principals that employed transformational leadership practices had a direct influence on teachers' work. This study also examined how principals' leadership styles influenced teachers' sense of efficacy and identified the following ten transformational leader actions that effected teacher self efficacy:

1. Models Behavior,
2. Believes in Teacher Capacity,
3. Inspires Group Purpose,

4. Promotes Teacher Empowerment and Shared Decision-Making,
5. Recognizes Teacher Efforts and Accomplishment,
6. Provides Personal and Professional Support,
7. Manages Student Behavior,
8. Promotes a Sense of Community,
9. Fosters Teamwork and Collaboration, and
10. Encourages Innovation and Continual Growth (p. 11).

The correlation between transformational leadership and teacher's sense of efficacy is important to student achievement and the notion that schools are complex organizational systems with goals and objectives, the attitudes, beliefs and efforts of each teacher could potentially impact the success or failure of the school (Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004).

Summary

Over the years researchers and scholars in the field of leadership studies have debated the definition of leadership. A review of the research finds that leadership is defined by context in which the phenomenon is being observed. However, leadership regardless of the discipline is a relationship that exists between the leader and follower, in which the leader influences and/or inspires the individuals or a group to achieve personal and/or group goals. The review of literature explored the diverse leadership theories and styles employed by leaders in religion, politics, business, military and education. Much of what is found in educational leadership is based on concepts found in organizational psychology and made popular by Bass and his colleagues who expanded Burns's theory of transactional and transformational leadership. A review of the literature noted that the

works of Burns (2010) and Bass (1985, 1990a, 1990b, 1997) was extended by Leithwood's (1992, 1993a, 1993b, 1994, 2004) concept of transformational leadership in education.

The advent of educational reform, restructuring and accountability has brought challenges to the field of education. Despite what appears to be unfair mandated demands school leaders and teachers are charged with improving student achievement. However, in the recent years teachers have struggled with their self-assurance, sense of self-worth, and confidence that they have the capacity to effect student achievement. Bandura's (1994, 1997) theory of self efficacy and its impact on education was discussed and the research suggested that a link exists between teachers self efficacy and student performance outcomes. The educational transformational leadership construct was reviewed and believed to be the most suitable style of leadership to directly influence teacher self efficacy which directly effects student achievement. Review of the literature on the research found that the self-efficacy element of Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory has affect on motivation and student performance. This literature analysis included the investigative reviews on leadership, leadership theories and styles, educational leadership and studies on educational transformational leadership and the correlation with teacher self efficacy.

Chapter III re-examines the research questions and hypotheses from chapter I and details the methods that the researcher used to collect and analyze data. In this chapter the researcher describes the research design, research participants, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and data analysis.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study was implemented in a northwestern suburban school district in a southeastern state. This school district served approximately 106,000 students during the 2010-2011 school year and employed over 7,400 classroom teachers. The school district contains 114 schools, 25 of which are middle schools. In the 2010-2011 school year 11 of the school district's 25 middle schools were identified as Title I schools and four of these schools were recognized by the state's department of education as Distinguished Title I Schools. To earn this mark of distinction, a school must achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for three consecutive school years. To protect the schools confidentiality and the participant's anonymity each school was randomly coded in the following format: CCSDMSCHL#, for example CCSDMSCHL1.

Once permission was received from the school district and the schools principals, the study was carried out in the school district's 25 middle schools. Participants for this study were teachers from the district's 25 middle schools. The teachers were asked to complete the Principal Leadership Questionnaire (PLQ) designed by Jantzi and Leithwood (1996), to collect data on the teachers' perceptions of their of principal's transformational leadership practices. In addition, the teachers were asked to complete the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) developed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk (2001) to measure the teachers' level of efficacy in the following areas: instructional strategies, student engagement and classroom management. Student

achievement data from the 2010-2011 Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) were also examined.

The advent of educational reform, restructuring and accountability brings challenges to the field of education. Despite mandated demands, principals and teachers are charged with improving student achievement through the student learning process. However, in the recent years teachers have struggled with their self-assurance, sense of self-worth, and confidence that they have the capacity to influence and improve student achievement. Despite the various challenges, research suggests that a correlation exists between teachers' actions and student performance outcomes, therefore it is essential the principals understand their unique role and how their leadership practices are associated with how teachers judge their own "capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated" (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk, 2001, p. 783). The goal of this study was to examine the following research questions and hypotheses that relate to middle school teachers' perceptions of their of principal's transformational school leadership practices, teacher efficacy and student achievement, as measured by scores on the CRCT:

1. If there is a relationship between middle school teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational school leadership practices and the teacher's sense of efficacy, which transformational leadership dimensions are associated with teacher efficacy?

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between middle school teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational leadership practices and the teacher's sense of efficacy.

2. If there is a relationship between middle school teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational school leadership practices and student achievement, as measured by student scores on the CRCT, which transformational school leadership dimensions best predict student achievement?

H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between middle school teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational leadership practices and student achievement, as measured by scores on the CRCT.

3. If there is a relationship between the teachers' sense of efficacy factors and student achievement, as measured by student scores on the CRCT, which factors best predict student achievement?

H_{03} : There is no significant relationship between the teachers' sense of efficacy factors and student achievement, as measured by scores on the CRCT.

Research Design

This analysis was a non-experimental quantitative correlational study that sought to analyze the relationship between middle school teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational school leadership practices, the teacher's sense of efficacy and student achievement. This study also used descriptive research methods to make generalizations about a selected population by examining a sample of that population. Correlational research focuses on investigating the relationship that exists between variables and does not seek to prove causation. When a relationship is recognized, the variables are understood to be correlated. The degree of the relationship between the

variables will be illustrated through the correlational coefficient which measures the strength of the relationship between the identified variables (Ary, Jacobs, & Razaivieh, 1996; Creswell, 2012). The researcher measured the independent variable, teachers' perceptions of their of principal's transformational leadership practices, and two dependent variables, teachers' sense of efficacy and student achievement. A Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between the six transformational leadership dimensions and each of the three teacher sense of efficacy factors. A multiple regression analysis was used to examine the data related to the relationship between middle school teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational school leadership practices and student achievement, and the relationship between the teachers' sense of efficacy factors and student achievement. The study illustrates the relationship and influence of the independent variable on the each of the dependent variables.

Participants

Research participants were teachers from the school district's 25 middle schools located in a northwestern suburban school district in a southeastern state. Profile data for each middle school were obtained from the state's department of education web site and used to research the schools demographic information and student achievement data.

Procedures

Prior to collecting data the researcher submitted an application to conduct the proposed research and a human subject review form to the Institutional Review Board at The University of Southern Mississippi. The researcher also submitted an application to conduct research to the selected school district's office of accountability. Per the school district's policy, this standard procedure protects the district's students and staff from

unnecessary data collection and promotes quality research to advance student achievement in the school district. After approval to conduct the study was granted by the school district (Appendix A) and written consent was received from Institutional Review Board of The University of Southern Mississippi (Appendix B), the researcher contacted the district's 25 middle school principals via email, described the purpose of the research, invited their school to participate in the study and requested permission to survey their teachers (Appendix C).

Principals that agreed to participate in the study were sent a letter detailing: the purpose of the research, a description of the instruments that was used, and information regarding confidentiality and anonymity issues (see Appendix D). In addition, the principals at the participating schools were instructed to complete and return to the researcher, via fax or mail, the Research Participant Consent Form (Appendix E) and the Principal Demographic Data Form (Appendixes F). Demographic data related to the principals' and teachers' years of experience and years at their current school were examined to determine the possible level of familiarity the teachers may have with their principals and to determine if the principals' leadership practices were established enough to have some influence on the academic culture of the school (Hoernemann, 1998; Niedermeyer, 2003; Philibin, 1997). These forms were included with the letter to the principal that detailed the purpose of the study. The researcher mailed or hand delivered, with specific instructions, the following teacher materials: teacher letters (Appendix H), Research Participant Consent Forms (Appendix E), Principal Leadership Questionnaires (Appendix I), and Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scales questionnaires (Appendix J). Each school participating in the study received 60 packets. Similar to the

principals' letters (Appendix D), the teachers' letters (Appendix H) explained the purpose of the study and invited teachers to participate in the study. Teachers that agreed to participate in the study were asked to complete the Research Participant Consent Form, PLQ and TSES. Participation took approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete forms that were administered at a time designated by the school's principal. At the top page of the PLQ the following demographic questions were asked: How many years (including this year) have you been an educator? And How many years (including this year) have you been at this school?

Principals designated a staff member at each school to distribute the forms and questionnaires to teachers and read the instructions from the teacher questionnaire directions sheet (Appendix G). In an effort to increase the probability that each participant would respond to the questions accurately and honestly, the researcher requested that each principal not be present during the time that teachers completed their questionnaires and that they have another staff member administer, collect and secure all materials related to this study. Prior to completing surveys and providing demographic information, participants were asked to complete a Research Participant Consent Form. This form accompanied a letter that explained the purpose of the study to the participants and invited them to participate in the study. The Research Participant Consent Form discussed the following: purpose for the research; description of the Research; benefits; potential risks, confidentiality; voluntary nature of participation; and participant's assurance.

After each participating teacher's forms and questionnaires had been completed and collected, the staff member prepared all the survey materials to be picked up or

returned via mail to the researcher. The researcher prepared the materials for statistical data analysis by coding each teacher form and questionnaire to ensure that the researcher could properly analyze the results for each participating school.

Instrumentation

Two instruments were used to collect data for this study. The Principal Leadership Questionnaire (PLQ), designed by Jantzi and Leithwood (1996), was used to collect data on the teachers' perceptions of their of principal's transformational school leadership practices in six identified dimensions. These six dimensions are: Identifying and articulating a vision; Providing an appropriate model; Fostering the acceptance of group goals; Providing individualized support; Providing intellectual stimulation and Holding high performance expectations. Permission to use this instrument was obtained from Kenneth Leithwood (Appendix K). The Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES), developed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk (2001) was used to collect data on the teachers' level of efficacy in the following areas: instructional strategies, student engagement and classroom management. Permission to use the TSES was given by Megan Tschannen-Moran (Appendix L). Student achievement data were analyzed using the test results from the Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT).

Principal Leadership Questionnaire

The PLQ is a 24 Likert-type question instrument that is designed to measure teachers' perception of their principals' transformation school leadership practices. The PLQ has four response choices: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree. This questionnaire emerged from a study conducted by Jantzi and Leithwood (1996). The purpose of that study was "to develop and partly test a theoretical account of how

teachers' perceptions of transformational school leadership are formed" (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996, p. 530). The following studies provided construct validity for the PLQ Prater (2004), Schooley (2005), Ryan (2007), and Mees (2008). Listed below are descriptions of the six dimensions/factors measured by the PLQ:

1. Identifying and articulating a vision: a practice on the part of the principal aimed at identifying new opportunities for his or her school staff members and developing, articulating, and inspiring others with his or her vision for the future (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996).
2. Providing an appropriate model: a practice on the part of the principal that sets an example for the school staff members to follow consistent with the values the principal espouses (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996).
3. Fostering the acceptance of group goals: a practice on the part of the principal aimed at promoting cooperation among school staff members and assisting them to work together toward common goals (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996).
4. Providing individualized support: a practice on the part of the principal that indicates respect for school staff members and concern about their personal feelings and needs (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996).
5. Providing intellectual stimulation: a practice on the part of the principal that challenges school staff members to reexamine some of the assumptions about their work and rethink how it can be performed (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996).
6. Holding high performance expectations: a practice that demonstrates the principal's expectations for excellence, quality, and high performance on the part of the school staff (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996).

The questions associated with each dimension and the internal consistency reliabilities given as Cronbach's alpha are listed on Table 1.

Table 1

PLQ Dimension Item Distribution and Reliability Coefficient

Leadership Dimension/Factor	# of Items per Dimension	Cronbach's alpha
Identifying and articulating a vision	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	0.88
Providing an appropriate model	6, 7, 8	0.86
Fostering the acceptance of group goals	9, 10, 11, 12, 13	0.80
Providing individualized support	14, 15, 16, 17, 18	0.82
Providing intellectual stimulation	19, 20, 21	0.77
Holding high performance expectations	22, 23, 24	0.73

Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale

A number of instruments have been developed to measure the construct, teacher efficacy; however, many of these instruments have a variety of inadequacies and problems, including validity and reliability issues. These concerns, in addition to others have resulted in the development of new measures designed to better capture the teacher efficacy construct. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk (2001) analyzed many of the issues connected to the measurement of teacher efficacy and proposed a new instrument. This

new instrument was based on a measurement developed by Bandura and it described teachers' tasks that previously developed measurements overlooked (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk, 2001). Initially called the Ohio State Teachers Efficacy Scale (OSTES), this instrument later became the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES). During the testing phase three dimension/factors emerged: efficacy in student engagement; efficacy in instructional strategies; and efficacy in classroom management.

Factor analysis was used to test the TSES to identify subscale scores for three identified factors: Efficacy in Student Engagement, Efficacy in Instructional Strategies, and Efficacy in Classroom Management. The third study resulted in an instrument with two forms, a long form with 24 items and a short form with 12 items. The TSES employs a nine-point Likert scale with the following possible responses: (1) Nothing; (3) Very little; (5) Some influence; (7) Quite a bit; and (9) A great deal. Both versions of the TSES are a reliable measure of the teacher efficacy construct (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk, 2001). Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk (2001) state that "positive correlations with other measures of personal teaching efficacy provide evidence for construct validity" (p. 801). The number of questions associated with each factor and the internal consistency reliabilities given as Cronbach's alpha are listed in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2

TSES Reliability Coefficient

Teacher Efficacy Factor	Short Form Cronbach's alpha
Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale	0.90

Table 2 (continued).

Teacher Efficacy Factor	Short Form Cronbach's alpha
Efficacy for Instructional Strategies	0.86
Efficacy for Classroom Management	0.86
Efficacy for Student Engagement	0.81

Table 3

TSES Factor Item Distribution

Teacher Efficacy Factor	Short Form Item #
Efficacy for Student Engagement	2, 3, 4, 11
Efficacy for Instructional Strategies	5, 9, 10, 12
Efficacy for Classroom Management	1, 6, 7, 8

For the purpose of this study the researcher examined student achievement data by using the test results from the CRCT for the school year 2010 – 2011. Student achievement from the CRCT's in the areas of reading, English/language arts and mathematics were included. The CRCT is a state mandated achievement test for students in grades one through eight and it measures the students' comprehension of the competencies taught in the state curriculum. This assessment provides assurance that

students are learning at their grade level and presents data to teachers, schools and school districts to assist in making better instructional decisions, the results provide information about the academic achievement of students, schools and school systems, the data is further used to identify strengths and areas of improvement. The CRCT also satisfies the accountability requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Scores are reported according to the following performance levels: Meets Standard, Does Not Meet Standard and Exceeds Standard (Georgia Department of Education, 2011).

Data Analysis

After all data were collected, the researcher organized and prepared the data for analysis. The researcher scored the data by assigning a numeric value for each question on the instruments used to collect data. Subsequently, all data were entered into SPSS for data analysis. The level of significance for the Pearson's correlation coefficient was set at an alpha level of .01 and all other data analysis in this study were set at an alpha level of .05. The researcher analyzed descriptive data determine the means, modes, ranges and standard deviations, from the results of the questionnaire instruments. The descriptive statistic measures categorized the teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational school leadership practices and identified the level of teacher efficacy. The research questions and hypotheses in this study were addressed using Pearson's correlational statistics and regression analysis.

Summary

Chapter III explained how the study intended to answer the research questions stated in Chapter I. Chapter III detailed the methodology of the study and described the research design, research participants, instrumentation, data collection procedures and

data analysis. Quantitative and non-experimental methods were used to address the research questions and hypotheses in this correlational study that examined the relationship between middle school teachers' perceptions of principal's transformational school leadership practices, teacher's sense of efficacy. Chapter IV will provide the results of the study and Chapter V will discuss the implications of these findings.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

In recent years, research reviews found that transformational leadership appears to have the greatest direct influence on teacher efficacy and an indirect effect on student achievement. Ross and Gray (2006b) stated that teachers in schools with principals that employ transformational school leadership practices show a sense of contentment in their work environment and are committed to helping the school accomplish its desired goals and objectives. Leithwood (2004) asserts that transformational leadership appears to be the most suitable leadership construct to assist educational leaders with the challenges they face.

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship that exists between middle school teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational school leadership practices, teacher efficacy and student achievement. The study also analyzed which transformational school leadership dimensions were predictors for the teacher sense of efficacy factors and student achievement as measured by math and reading/English language arts CRCT scores. Analyses were also conducted to determine which teacher sense of efficacy factors were predictors for student achievement as measured by math and reading/English language arts CRCT scores. Each school that participated in the study reported having approximately 60 teachers on staff. Therefore, 60 survey packets were sent to 17 middle schools with grade configurations of sixth through eighth grades with the exceptions of two middle schools. One middle school was configured for sixth grade only and the other school was configured for seventh and

eighth grades. A total of 1,020 surveys were administered. Responses were received from 256 teachers, creating a response rate of 25%. The surveys were designed to collect data on the perceptions of their principal's transformational school leadership practices and the teachers' level of teacher efficacy in the following areas: instructional strategies, student engagement and classroom management. The results of the study are presented in this chapter.

Description of the Participants

Initially, 25 middle schools were selected for the study. However, seven of the middle school principals declined to have their schools participate in the study. One of the middle schools data was not used because there was a change in principals, prior to the surveys being administered. This change resulted in an interim principal assuming the leadership responsibilities for the school. The survey data from this middle school indicated that due to the change in leadership the teachers were not clear as to how they should respond to the survey questions regarding their principal.

Research participants for the study were teachers ($N = 256$) from 17 middle schools located in a northwestern suburban school district in a southeastern state. In the school year 2010–2011 eight of the 17 middle schools were identified as Title I middle schools with four identified as Title I distinguished middle schools. Twelve of the 17 middle schools met adequate yearly progress (AYP) for academic performance with one Title I distinguished middle school and two Title I middle schools meeting AYP for academic performance.

Demographic data were reported for principals and teachers and included the years of principal experience, years as a principal of current school, years of teaching

experience and years as a teacher at current school. Of the middle school teachers that participated in the study, 52.9% of their principals indicated that they had one to six years of experience as a principal and 47.1% indicated that they had seven years or more.

Descriptive data for the principals' years experience is reported in Table 4.

Table 4

Years of Experience as a Principal

Yrs of Experience as Principal	Frequency	Percent
1 to 3	4	23.5
4 to 6	5	29.4
7 to 9	4	23.5
10 or more	4	23.5
Total	17	100.0

Data in Table 5 indicate that of the middle school teachers that participated in the study, 94.1% of their principals indicated that they had been a principal at their current school one to six years and 5.9% reported that they had been a principal at their current school seven years or more.

Table 5

Years as Principal of Current School

Yrs of Experience at Current School	Frequency	Percent
1 to 3	6	35.3
4 to 6	10	58.8
7 to 9	1	5.9
10 or more	0	0
Total	17	100.0

Descriptive statistics indicating the number of years of teaching experience reported by the 256 teachers that participated in the study is presented in Table 6. Years of teaching experience ranged from 10 or more years (62.1%; $n = 159$) to one to three years (5.9%; $n = 15$).

Table 6

Years of Teaching Experience

Yrs of Teaching Experience	Frequency	Percent
1 to 3	15	5.9
4 to 6	46	18.0

Table 6 (continued).

Yrs of Teaching Experience	Frequency	Percent
7 to 9	33	12.9
10 or more	159	62.1
Total	253	98.8
No Response	3	1.2
Total	256	100.0

As indicated in Table 7, the majority of the teachers reported that they had been a teacher at their current school four to six years (33.6%; $n = 86$), followed by teachers that reported 10 or more years (29.3%; $n = 75$) as a teacher at their current school.

Table 7

Years as a Teacher at Current School

Yrs as a Teacher at Current School	Frequency	Percent
1 to 3	60	23.4
4 to 6	86	33.6
7 to 9	32	12.5
10 or more	75	29.3
Total	253	98.8
No Response	3	1.2

Table 7 (continued).

Yrs as a Teacher at Current School	Frequency	Percent
Total	256	100.0

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize and describe the results of the teachers' surveys. Minimum, maximum, means, and standard deviations of the participants and variables are presented here.

Teachers that participated in the study completed the Principal Leadership Questionnaire (PLQ), designed by Jantzi and Leithwood (1996). The instrument was used to collect data on the teachers' perceptions of their of principal's transformational school leadership practices in six identified dimensions. These six dimensions are: Identifying and articulating a vision; Providing an appropriate model; Fostering the acceptance of group goals; Providing individualized support; Providing intellectual stimulation and Holding high performance expectations. The PLQ has four response choices: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree. Descriptive data indicating the teachers' perceptions are presented in Table 8. The highest mean reported was related to high performance expectations, 3.36 ($SD = .70$) and the lowest mean reported was related to vision, 3.14 ($SD = .71$).

Table 8

Principal Leadership Questionnaire (PLQ) Dimension Data

PLQ Dimension	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Vision	255	1.00	4.00	3.14	.71
Modeling	255	1.00	4.00	3.17	.77
Group Goals Acceptance	255	1.00	4.00	3.26	.59
Individualized Support	253	1.00	4.00	3.20	.71
Intellectual Stimulation	253	1.00	4.00	3.22	.67
High Performance Expectations	252	1.00	4.00	3.36	.70

Note. The PLQ has four response choices: (1) Strongly Disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Agree, and (4) Strongly Agree.

Data in Table 9 reported the results of the teachers' responses to the PLQ dimension and corresponding survey questions. The higher the mean score, the more the participants agreed with the question in the corresponding dimension. The highest mean scores for each dimension were reported as follows: vision, question 1, 3.32 ($SD = .74$); modeling, question 7, 3.30 ($SD = .76$); group goals acceptance, question 10, 3.44 ($SD = .63$); individualized support, question 16, 3.26 ($SD = .86$); intellectual stimulation, question 20, 3.32 ($SD = .74$); and high performance expectations, question 23, 3.40 ($SD = .75$).

Table 9

Principal Leadership Questionnaire (PLQ) Dimensions and Corresponding Survey Questions

PLQ Dimension and Survey Question	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Vision					
PLQ Question 1	255	1.00	4.00	3.32	.74
PLQ Question 2	254	1.00	4.00	3.12	.82
PLQ Question 3	255	1.00	4.00	3.16	.80
PLQ Question 4	255	1.00	4.00	3.00	.87
PLQ Question 5	252	1.00	4.00	3.09	.78
Modeling					
PLQ Question 6	254	1.00	4.00	3.03	.94
PLQ Question 7	251	1.00	4.00	3.30	.76
PLQ Question 8	255	1.00	4.00	3.18	.82
Group Goals Acceptance					
PLQ Question 9	255	1.00	4.00	3.39	.66
PLQ Question 10	255	1.00	4.00	3.44	.63
PLQ Question 11	254	1.00	4.00	3.13	.75
PLQ Question 12	255	1.00	4.00	3.04	.79
PLQ Question 13	255	1.00	4.00	3.28	.66

Table 9 (continued).

Individualized Support					
PLQ Question 14	251	1.00	4.00	3.20	.71
PLQ Question 15	252	1.00	4.00	3.24	.71
PLQ Question 16	252	1.00	4.00	3.26	.86
PLQ Question 17	253	1.00	4.00	3.07	.93
PLQ Question 18	253	1.00	4.00	3.24	.87
Intellectual Stimulation					
PLQ Question 19	251	1.00	4.00	3.15	.76
PLQ Question 20	253	1.00	4.00	3.32	.74
PLQ Question 21	253	1.00	4.00	3.18	.73
High Performance Expectations					
PLQ Question 22	251	1.00	4.00	3.39	.73
PLQ Question 23	252	1.00	4.00	3.40	.75
PLQ Question 24	252	1.00	4.00	3.28	.78

Note. The PLQ has four response choices: (1) Strongly Disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Agree, and (4) Strongly Agree.

Teachers that participated in the study also completed the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES), developed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk (2001). The instrument was used to collect data on the teachers' level of efficacy in the following areas: instructional strategies, student engagement and classroom management. The TSES employs a nine point Likert scale with the following possible responses: (1)

Nothing; (3) Very little; (5) Some influence; (7) Quite a bit; and (9) A great deal. Data indicating the teachers' responses are presented in Table 10. The mean for the total teacher sense of efficacy was 7.61 ($SD = .85$) and the highest mean of the teacher sense of efficacy scale was related to efficacy for classroom management, 7.74 ($SD = 1.06$).

Table 10

Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) Factor Data

TSES Factor	N	Min	Max	Mean	<i>SD</i>
Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale Total	255	5.17	9.00	7.61	.85
Efficacy for Instructional Strategies	255	5.50	9.00	8.09	.80
Efficacy for Classroom Management	255	4.00	9.00	7.74	1.06
Efficacy for Student Engagement	253	4.00	9.00	6.99	1.18

Note. The TSES employs a nine point Likert scale with the following possible responses: (1) Nothing; (3) Very little; (5) Some influence; (7) Quite a bit; and (9) A great deal.

Data in Table 11 report the results of the teacher's responses to the TSES factors and corresponding survey questions. The higher the mean score on the particular dimension the more the participants agreed with that question in the corresponding factor. The highest mean scores for each factor were reported as follows: efficacy for student engagement, question 2, 6.79 ($SD = 1.54$); efficacy for instructional strategies, question 10, 8.29 ($SD = .88$); and efficacy for classroom management, question 8, 7.98 ($SD = 1.03$).

Table 11

Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) Factors and Corresponding Survey Questions

TSES Factors and Survey Question	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Efficacy for Student Engagement					
TSES Question 2	255	2.00	9.00	6.79	1.54
TSES Question 3	255	4.00	9.00	7.44	1.24
TSES Question 4	255	2.00	9.00	7.08	1.51
TSES Question 11	255	2.00	9.00	6.67	1.59
Efficacy for Instructional Strategies					
TSES Question 5	255	5.00	9.00	8.14	1.00
TSES Question 9	254	3.00	9.00	8.07	1.05
TSES Question 10	255	6.00	9.00	8.29	.88
TSES Question 12	254	5.00	9.00	7.84	1.06
Efficacy for Classroom Management					
TSES Question 1	254	2.00	9.00	7.77	1.38
TSES Question 6	254	3.00	9.00	7.81	1.17
TSES Question 7	255	2.00	9.00	7.43	1.35

Table 11 (continued).

TSES Factors and Survey Question	N	Min	Max	Mean	<i>SD</i>
TSES Question 8	254	5.00	9.00	7.98	1.03

Note. The TSES employs a nine point Likert scale with the following possible responses: (1) Nothing; (3) Very little; (5) Some influence; (7) Quite a bit; and (9) A great deal.

Data collected from the PLQ and TSES were used to examine correlations between the teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational leadership practices and the teachers' sense of efficacy. The Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to analyze relationships between the six transformational leadership dimensions and each of the three teacher sense of efficacy factors. Eighteen possible correlations were considered and all were reported to be statistically significant, however the correlation coefficients indicated weak relationships between the variables. The results of the correlational analysis are presented in Table 12 where each correlation coefficient and statistical significance is indicated. The highest correlation indicated that individualized support was significantly correlated to efficacy for classroom management, $r(252) = .376, p \leq .001$. The lowest correlation indicated that group goals was significantly correlated to efficacy for instruction, $r(254) = .169, p = .007$.

Table 12

Pearson's Correlations of Teachers' Perceptions of Principals' Transformational Leadership Practices and Teachers' Sense of Efficacy

Leadership Dimensions	Statistic	Efficacy for Management	Efficacy for Engagement	Efficacy for Instruction
Vision	Pearson's Correlation	.310**	.331**	.202**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	≤ .001	≤ .001	.001
Modeling	Pearson's Correlation	.257**	.311**	.194**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	≤ .001	≤ .001	.002
Group Goals	Pearson's Correlation	.268**	.295**	.169**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	≤ .001	≤ .001	.007
Individualized Support	Pearson's Correlation	.376**	.294**	.224**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	≤ .001	≤ .001	≤ .001
Intellectual Stimulation	Pearson's Correlation	.297**	.335**	.240**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	≤ .001	≤ .001	≤ .001

Table 12 (continued).

Leadership Dimensions	Statistic	Efficacy for Management	Efficacy for Engagement	Efficacy for Instruction
High Performance Expectations	Pearson's Correlation	.216**	.346**	.230**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	≤ .001	≤ .001	≤ .001

Note. **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Statistical Analysis

The purpose of the study was to explore the relationship that exists between middle school teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational school leadership practices, teacher efficacy and student achievement. In order to address the research questions and test the hypothesis for the study a multiple regression analysis was conducted.

Research Question One and the null hypotheses read as follows:

1. If there is a relationship between middle school teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational school leadership practices and the teacher's sense of efficacy, which transformational leadership dimensions are associated with teacher efficacy?

H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between middle school teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational leadership practices and the teacher's sense of efficacy.

Multiple regression analysis was used to determine if transformational leadership dimensions significantly predicted teacher's sense of efficacy factors. The regression model emerged as significant, $F(6, 243) = 7.307, p \leq .001$. R^2 for the model was .153 and the adjusted R^2 was .132. According to the beta coefficients (β) the majority of the influence on total teacher sense of efficacy was from vision ($\beta = .187, p = .189$) while high expectation ($\beta = .073, p = .450$) had a smaller influence and modeling ($\beta = -.074, p = .610$) had the smallest influence which was negative. The results of the regression presented in Table 13 indicated that all predictors in the model yielded a non-significant value.

Table 13

Multiple Regression Analysis: Transformational Leadership Dimensions with Total Teacher Sense of Efficacy

Predictor Variables	<i>B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Vision	.223	.187	1.317	.189
Modeling	-.083	-.074	-.510	.610
Group Goals Acceptance	-.039	-.027	-.245	.806
Individualized Support	.210	.175	1.404	.162
Intellectual Stimulation	.110	.087	.670	.503
High Performance Expectations	.089	.073	.757	.450

Note. *B* = Unstandardized regression coefficient, β = Standardized regression coefficient, *t* = Observed *t* value, and *p* = Significance level.

*Significance at the 0.05 level.

The regression model for transformational leadership dimensions with efficacy for classroom management emerged as significant, $F(6, 243) = 7.538, p \leq .001$. R^2 for the model was .157, and the adjusted R^2 was .136. According to the beta coefficients (β) the majority of the influence on efficacy for classroom management was from individualized support ($\beta = .440, p \leq .001$). Vision, modeling, group goals acceptance, intellectual stimulation and high performance were not significant. The results of the regression analysis are presented in Table 14.

Table 14

Multiple Regression Analysis: Transformational Leadership Dimensions with Efficacy for Classroom Management

Predictor Variables	<i>B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Vision	.360	.240	1.695	.091
Modeling	-.304	-.217	-1.491	.137
Group Goals Acceptance	-.030	-.017	-.153	.879
Individualized Support	.664	.440	3.541	$\leq .001^*$
Intellectual Stimulation	-.007	-.004	-.035	.972
High Performance Expectations	-.136	-.089	-.930	.354

Note. *B* = Unstandardized regression coefficient, β = Standardized regression coefficient, *t* = Observed *t* value, and *p* = Significance level.

*Significance at the 0.05 level.

The regression model for transformational leadership dimensions with efficacy for engagement emerged as significant, $F(6, 243) = 6.638, p \leq .001$. R^2 for the model was .141 and the adjusted R^2 was .12. Results of the regression indicate that all predictors

were not significant, however the beta coefficients (β) indicate that the majority of the influence on efficacy for engagement management was from high expectations ($\beta = .166$, $p = .088$). The results of the regression analysis are presented in Table 15.

Table 15

Multiple Regression Analysis: Transformational Leadership Dimensions with Efficacy for Engagement

Predictor Variables	<i>B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Vision	.227	.136	.952	.342
Modeling	.096	.062	.422	.674
Group Goals Acceptance	.035	.018	.158	.875
Individualized Support	-.132	-.079	-.629	.530
Intellectual Stimulation	.178	.100	.769	.443
High Performance Expectations	.281	.166	1.712	.088

Note. *B* = Unstandardized regression coefficient, β = Standardized regression coefficient, *t* = Observed *t* value, and *p* = Significance level.

*Significance at the 0.05 level.

The regression results indicate that the model for transformational leadership dimensions with efficacy for instruction emerged as significant and overall the model is a predictor of efficacy for instruction, $F(6, 243) = 2.846$, $p = .011$. R^2 for the model was .066, and adjusted R^2 was .043. The results of the regression analysis are presented in Table 16.

Table 16

Multiple Regression Analysis: Transformational Leadership Dimensions with Efficacy for Instruction

Predictor Variables	<i>B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Vision	.080	.071	.476	.634
Modeling	-.039	-.037	-.243	.808
Group Goals Acceptance	-.123	-.092	-.789	.431
Individualized Support	.097	.085	.651	.516
Intellectual Stimulation	.159	.132	.970	.333
High Performance Expectations	.122	.106	1.049	.295

Note. *B* = Unstandardized regression coefficient, β = Standardized regression coefficient, *t* = Observed *t* value, and *p* = Significance level.

*Significance at the 0.05 level.

Research Question Two and the null hypotheses read as follows:

2. If there is a relationship between middle school teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational school leadership practices and student achievement, as measured by student scores on the CRCT, which transformational school leadership dimensions best predict student achievement?

H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between middle school teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational leadership practices and student achievement, as measured by scores on the CRCT.

Multiple regression analysis was used to determine if transformational leadership dimensions significantly predicted student achievement as measured by the math and reading/English language arts CRCT scores. The regression model for transformational leadership dimensions with math CRCT scores emerged as significant, $F(6, 244) = 10.628, p \leq .001$. R^2 for the model was .207 and the adjusted R^2 was .188. According to the beta coefficients (β) the majority of the influence on math CRCT scores was from vision ($\beta = .295, p = .032$). Modeling, group goals acceptance, individualized support, intellectual stimulation and high performance were not significant. The results of the regression analysis are presented in Table 17.

Table 17

Multiple Regression Analysis: Transformational Leadership Dimensions with Math CRCT Scores

Predictor Variables	<i>B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Vision	4.537	.295	2.158	.032*
Modeling	2.655	.185	1.317	.189
Group Goals Acceptance	2.745	.150	1.406	.161
Individualized Support	-2.156	-.140	-1.170	.243
Intellectual Stimulation	-2.051	-.126	-1.011	.313
High Performance Expectations	1.464	.094	1.007	.315

Note. *B* = Unstandardized regression coefficient, β = Standardized regression coefficient, *t* = Observed *t* value, and *p* = Significance level.

*Significance at the 0.05 level.

The regression model transformational leadership dimensions with reading/English language arts CRCT scores emerged as significant, $F(6, 244) = 12.326$, $p \leq .001$. R^2 for the model was .233 and the adjusted R^2 was .214. According to the beta coefficients (β) the majority of the influence on reading/English language arts CRCT scores was from vision ($\beta = .351$, $p = .010$). Group goals acceptance ($\beta = .234$, $p = .027$) had a smaller influence and modeling, individualized support, intellectual stimulation and high performance were not significant. The results of the regression analysis are presented in Table 18.

Table 18

Multiple Regression Analysis: Transformational Leadership Dimensions with Reading/English Language Arts CRCT Scores

Predictor Variables	<i>B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Vision	1.878	.351	2.612	.010*
Modeling	.096	.019	.140	.889
Group Goals Acceptance	1.483	.234	2.220	.027*
Individualized Support	-.649	-.121	-1.030	.304
Intellectual Stimulation	-.252	-.044	-.363	.717
High Performance Expectations	.303	.056	.610	.542

Note. *B* = Unstandardized regression coefficient, β = Standardized regression coefficient, *t* = Observed *t* value, and *p* = Significance level.

*Significance at the 0.05 level.

Research Question Three and the null hypotheses read as follows:

3. If there is a relationship between the teachers' sense of efficacy factors and student achievement, as measured by student scores on the CRCT, which factors best predict student achievement?

H_{03} : There is no significant relationship between the teachers' sense of efficacy factors and student achievement, as measured by scores on the CRCT.

Multiple regression analysis was used to determine if teacher sense of efficacy factors significantly predicted student achievement as measured by the math and reading/English language arts CRCT scores. The regression model for teachers' sense of efficacy factors with math CRCT scores emerged as significant, $F(3, 251) = 5.263, p = .002$. R^2 for the model was .059 and the adjusted R^2 was .048. According to the beta coefficients (β) the majority of the influence on math CRCT scores was from efficacy for classroom management ($\beta = .254, p = .001$). Efficacy for instruction and efficacy for engagement were not significant. The results of the regression analysis are presented in Table 19.

Table 19

Multiple Regression Analysis: Teachers Sense of Efficacy Factors with Math CRCT Scores

Predictor Variables	B	β	t	p
Efficacy for Management	2.630	.254	3.251	.001*
Efficacy for Engagement	-1.336	-.143	-1.766	.079

Table 19 (continued).

Predictor Variables	<i>B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Efficacy for Instruction	1.266	.092	1.245	.214

Note. *B* = Unstandardized regression coefficient, β = Standardized regression coefficient, *t* = Observed *t* value, and *p* = Significance level.

*Significance at the 0.05 level.

The regression model for teachers' sense of efficacy factors with reading/English language arts CRCT scores emerged as significant, $F(3, 251) = 7.143, p \leq .001$. $R^2 = .079$ and the adjusted R^2 was .068. According to the beta coefficients (β) the majority of the influence on reading/English language arts CRCT scores was from efficacy for classroom management ($\beta = .295, p \leq .001$). Efficacy for instruction and efficacy for engagement were not significant. The results of the regression analysis are presented in Table 20.

Table 20

Multiple Regression Analysis: Teachers Sense of Efficacy Factors with Reading/English Language Arts CRCT Scores

Predictor Variables	<i>B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Efficacy for Management	1.059	.295	3.821	$\leq .001^*$
Efficacy for Engagement	-.414	-.128	-1.600	.111
Efficacy for Instruction	.402	.085	1.154	.250

Note. *B* = Unstandardized regression coefficient, β = Standardized regression coefficient, *t* = Observed *t* value, and *p* = Significance level.

*Significance at the 0.05 level.

Summary

Descriptive and statistical analysis indicated that teachers perceived high performance expectations as the most important transformational leadership dimension, 3.36 ($SD = .70$). The least important transformational leadership dimension reported was vision which received the lowest mean score, 3.14 ($SD = .71$). The Pearson's correlation coefficient examined relationships between the six transformational leadership dimensions and each of the three teacher sense of efficacy factors. The results of the analysis indicated that individualized support with efficacy for classroom management, $r(252) = .376, p \leq .001$ yielded the highest correlation and group goals with efficacy for instruction, $r(254) = .169, p = .007$ yielded the lowest correlation. All correlations were statistically significant but reported weak relationships between the variables.

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to address the three research questions and test the null hypotheses. The results of the regression models that included the six transformational leadership dimensions with each of the teacher sense of efficacy factors reported correlations between the predictor variables and the outcome variables. Therefore, H_{01} was rejected. Individualized support emerged as the best predictor for efficacy for classroom management. Results of the regression models that included the six transformational leadership dimensions with student achievement as measured by the math and reading/English language arts CRCT scores reported correlations between the predictor variables and the outcome variables. Therefore, H_{02} was rejected. Vision emerged as the best predictor for the math CRCT scores and vision and group goals emerged as the best predictor for the reading/English language arts CRCT scores. Results of the regression models that included the teacher sense of efficacy factors with

student achievement as measured by the math and reading/English language arts CRCT scores reported correlations between the predictor variables and the outcome variables. Therefore, H_{03} was rejected. Efficacy for classroom management emerged as the best predictor for math and reading/English language arts CRCT scores.

This study explored the relationship between middle school teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational school leadership practices, teacher efficacy and student achievement. As this chapter presented the results of the study, the next chapter will present a summary of procedures, summary of findings, discussion, limitations, recommendations for policy and practice and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to explore the relationship between middle school teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational school leadership practices, teacher efficacy and student achievement. The study also analyzed which transformational leadership dimensions were better predictors for the teacher sense of efficacy factors and student achievement as measured by math and reading/English language arts CRCT scores. Teachers from 17 middle schools located in a northwestern suburban school district in a southeastern state participated in the study. Chapter IV presented the statistical analyses of the research and identified the various correlations that existed between transformational school leadership, teacher efficacy and student achievement. This chapter will present a summary of the research procedures, summary of the findings, discussion, limitations, recommendations for policy and practice and recommendations for future research.

Summary of Procedures

A total of 1,020 surveys were administered and data for the study were obtained from surveys completed by 256 teachers from 17 middle schools located in a northwestern suburban school district in a southeastern state, creating a response rate of 25%. Once permission was received from the school district's office of accountability, the schools principals and the Institutional Review Board of The University of Southern Mississippi (see Appendix A), the study was conducted. Teachers that participated in this study completed the Principal Leadership Questionnaire (PLQ), designed by Jantzi

and Leithwood (1996) and the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES), developed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk (2001). The 2010-2011 Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) were also examined (Georgia Department of Education, 2011) to obtain student achievement data.

After the surveys were collected the data was prepared for statistical analysis by assigning a numeric value to each response group for each question on the instruments. Subsequently, the survey data was entered into SPSS to be analyzed and the student achievement data was examined to determine the school's academic standing based on the schools performance on the CRCT. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the frequencies, ranges, means and standard deviations of the survey results. A Pearson's correlation statistic was performed to analyze the relationships between the six transformational leadership dimensions and each of the three teacher sense of efficacy factors. Multiple regression analyses were used to determine which transformational school leadership dimensions best predicted student achievement and which teachers' sense of efficacy factors best predicted student achievement.

Major Findings

Of the middle school teachers that participated in the study, 52.9% of their principals indicated that they had one to six years of experience as a principal and 47.1% indicated that they had seven years or more. The results further indicated that 94.1% of the principals reported that they had been a principal at their current school one to six years and 5.9% reported that they had been a principal at their current school seven years or more. The research reported a wide range of teacher experience, with 23.9% of the teachers having one to six years of teaching experience and 75% having seven or more

years of teaching experience. The research found that 33.6% of the teacher respondents had been at their current school four to six years and 29.3% had been a teacher at their current school for 10 or more years. Demographic data of the principals' and teachers' years of experience and years at their current school were examined to determine the possible level of familiarity the teachers had with their principals and to determine if the principal's leadership practices were established enough to have some influence on the academic culture of the school.

Data analysis of the surveys revealed a number of significant findings. *Research Question One* examined the correlation between middle school teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational school leadership practices and the teacher's sense of efficacy. H_{01} was stated as follows: There is no significant relationship between middle school teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational leadership practices and the teacher's sense of efficacy. This study found a statistically significant relationship between principals' transformational leadership practices and teacher efficacy. Therefore, this hypothesis was rejected. This finding is supported by the research of Ross and Gray (2006b) which stated that transformational school leadership practices appear to have the greatest influence on teacher efficacy. The work of Peagler (2003) is consistent with the findings of this study and asserts that transformational leadership is the best suited form of leadership to assist principals in addressing the challenges associated with teacher efficacy and student achievement.

Research Question Two examined the correlation between middle school teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational school leadership practices and student achievement. H_{02} was stated as follows: There is no significant relationship

between middle school teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational leadership practices and student achievement, as measured by scores on the CRCT. This study found statistically significant relationships between principal's transformational leadership practices and the math and reading/English language arts CRCT scores. Therefore, this null hypothesis was rejected. These findings are consistent with the research of Marzano et al. (2005) who contend that school level leadership has a direct influence on student achievement. However, the findings of this study are not consistent with the research of Ross and Gray (2006a) and similar studies that assert that the principals' leadership practices do not have a direct influence on student achievement. These studies and their researchers contend that principals indirectly influence student achievement through the skills, abilities and effectiveness of teachers.

Research Question Three examined the correlation between teacher efficacy and student achievement. H_{03} was stated as follows: There is no significant relationship between middle teachers' sense of efficacy factors and student achievement, as measured by scores on the CRCT. This study found statistically significant relationships between teacher efficacy and the math and reading/English language arts CRCT scores. Therefore, this hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to explore the relationship that exists between middle school teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational school leadership practices, teacher efficacy and student achievement. Many of the findings in this study are consistent with current literature and previous research.

The demographic data reported for principals and teachers indicated that of the middle school teachers that participated in this study, the majority of their principals had four to six years of experience as a principal and that they had been a principal at their current school for four to six years. This is consistent with the research of Hoernemann, (1998), Philibin (1997), and Niedermeyer (2003) that excluded principals from their studies, that had been at a school less than three years because teachers would not have had enough time to become familiar with the principal, therefore the teachers could not adequately formulate an opinion about their principal's leadership practices and the effects.

The results of this study further indicated that the respondent teachers perceived high performance expectations as the most significant transformational leadership dimension. The following questions yielded the highest mean scores for the six transformational leadership dimensions as measured by the PLQ, thus indicating the level of importance and perception that teachers had about their principals' transformational leadership practices:

1. Identifying and articulating a vision - *Question 1*: My principal has both the capacity and the judgment to overcome most obstacles (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996).
2. Providing an appropriate model – *Question 7*: My principal symbolizes success and accomplishment within the profession of education (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996).

3. Fostering the acceptance of group goals – *Question 10*: My principal encourages faculty members to work toward the same goals (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996).
4. Providing individualized support – *Question 16*: My principal treats me as an individual with unique needs and expertise (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996).
5. Providing intellectual stimulation – *Question 20*: My principal stimulates me to think about what I am doing for the school's students (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996).
6. Holding high performance expectations – *Question 23*: My principal shows us that there are high expectations for the school's faculty as professionals (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996).

The research indicated that the same teachers mean score for efficacy for instructional strategies was reported between “Quite a Bit” and “A Great Deal”. A lower mean score was reported for efficacy for student engagement. The following questions yielded the highest mean scores for the three teacher efficacy factors as measured by the TSES, thus indicating the level of importance and perception that teachers had about their sense of teacher efficacy:

1. Efficacy for instructional strategies - *Question 10*: To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students confused? (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk, 2001).
2. Efficacy for classroom management – *Question 8*: How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students? (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk, 2001).

3. Efficacy for student engagement – *Question 2*: How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work? (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk, 2001).

Previous research has concluded that there is a link between principals' transformational leadership practices and teacher efficacy (Hoernemann, 1998; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Philibin, 1997, Ross & Gray 2006b). The results of H_{01} of this study are consistent with previous research and indicate a correlation between transformational leadership practices and teacher efficacy. Although statistically significant relationships were revealed, the results of this study indicate a weak correlation. The strength of the relationship, perhaps, is due to the sample size used in this study, a larger sample size could possibly yield different results.

The findings in this study revealed that individualized support and efficacy for classroom management were highly correlated, signifying that when a principal shows respect for teachers and concern about their feelings, well being and personal needs (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996) the more confidence and self assurance teachers may have about their capability and skills to control challenging situations in their classrooms. Teachers' abilities to manage classroom issues are more pronounced when a principal practices individualized support. This research found that individualized support was the best predictor for efficacy for classroom management. Ross and Gray (2006b) stated that teachers in schools with principals that employ transformational school leadership practices show a sense of contentment in their work environment and are committed to helping the school accomplish its desired goals and objectives. Ross and Gray (2006b) concluded in their study that:

Transformational leadership had an impact on the collective teacher efficacy of the school; teacher efficacy alone predicted teacher commitment to community partnerships; and transformational leadership had direct and indirect effects on teacher commitment to school mission and commitment to professional learning community. (p. 179)

Supporting teachers' commitment to their job through effective transformational school leadership is one strategy that principals can employ to reduce undesirable teacher turnover and attrition, according to Stronge, Richard, and Catano (2008). Leithwood (1993) emphasizes that transformational school leaders can advance the commitment of teachers by supporting their sense of self-worth, confidence, value and effectiveness.

This study found a correlation between principals' transformational leadership practices and student achievement and the findings are consistent with the research of Marzano et al. (2005) who contend that school-level leadership directly impacts student achievement. The authors "found a statically significant correlation between school-level leadership and student achievement at .25" (Waters & Cameron, 2007, p. 3). Marzano et al. (2005) conducted a meta-analysis of 69 studies to explore what the research said about school leadership and according to Waters and Cameron (2007) this research shows "clearly leadership makes a difference" (p. 3). The findings indicate that the identifying and articulating vision dimension of transformational leadership emerged as the best predictor for student achievement in math. Identifying and articulating vision was also identified, along with fostering acceptance of group goals dimension as the best predictors for student achievement in reading/English language arts. These results are perhaps related to the principals' ability to set goals for continued improvement toward

academic success and the principals' capability to serve as an instructional resource for teachers and staff members.

Seemingly these results do not appear to be consistent with the research and current literature that claims that principals do not have a direct effect on student achievement (Cotton, 2003; Leithwood, 2004; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Leithwood et al., 2004; Ross & Gray, 2006b). Ross and Gray (2006b) state that "principals, regardless of the student populations they serve, are held accountable for student achievement in their schools. However, research reviews find that the direct effect of principals on student achievement is near zero" (p. 799). The study by Leithwood et al. (2004) contend that student learning is influenced by three basic indirect leadership practices: setting directions, developing people and redesigning the organization. The effects of these leadership practices, which are similar to the leadership dimensions described in the transformational leadership model, accounts for about one fourth of total direct and indirect effects on student learning. Classroom instruction has the most influence on student achievement (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). The implication made by this study and previous research is that a principal's approach to leadership can play an essential role in influencing student achievement whether it is direct or indirect.

Limitations

This study's findings were limited by a number of factors. The sample population of middle school teachers from a large school district located in the Southeastern region of the United States was small, limiting the ability to generalize the study. Therefore, generalization of this study's findings with populations of similar demographic profiles should be carefully considered.

The results of the PLQ and TSES were contingent upon the willingness of the participants to take part and to respond honestly and accurately. Although careful measures were in place to ensure the participants anonymity it is possible that some teachers chose not to participate in the study because they were not comfortable with the level of assurance that their anonymity would be strenuously maintained.

Data for this study were based on student achievement data from the state's Department of Education web site. The data is considered reliable, but could contain some errors.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

The findings of this research revealed important implications for policy and practice in educational leadership. The establishment of educational policies such as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) set in motion the advent of austere accountability measures in education. In an attempt to combat some of the problems that plague this nation's educational system, law makers, educators and stakeholders have developed a complex system of solutions that ultimately hold school principals and teachers accountable for improving student achievement. Amid the recent authorizations, changes in educational policies and educational reform, principals are unsure of their ability to shape school culture and to create conducive educational climates and milieus that may positively affect student achievement.

According to Gulbin (2008) the concept of school reform to improve student achievement is a challenging task, but attempting to improve student academic performance in schools with large groups of students with varying learning styles and learning needs, is daunting. However, some are successful in improving student

performance despite the challenges. In addition to principals, teachers are also beginning to question their ability to contribute to the improvement of student achievement. Undoubtedly, teachers are the most important school resource and the connection to student achievement (Griffin, 2009) and research recognizes that teaching quality is the most dominant factor in determining student success and contends that effective teaching coupled with effective principal leadership can contribute to improving student academic performance. According to Leithwood and Riehl (2003) “leadership has significant effects on student learning, second only to the effects of the quality of curriculum and teachers’ instruction” (p. 4). Research indicates that a relationship exists between leadership practices, teacher efficacy and student performance outcomes (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).

Federal and state mandates on education have charged principals with improving the academic performance of all students by monitoring instruction, curriculum, and analyzing students’ progress. The challenge to improve the academic performance of all student learners, at some schools, has been compounded and complicated by the demographic differences of the student populations. This study concurs with similar research that the correlation between principals’ transformational leadership practices and teacher efficacy is an important factor in improving student achievement. As the field of education continues to move toward levels of uncertainty, principals must become cognizant of the relationship that exists between their leadership practices and the teachers’ belief that they have the ability to have a positive effect on student achievement (Ashton, 1985).

Transformational leadership has emerged as the most appropriate style of leadership designed to address the many issues and challenges that principals face in regards to improving student achievement. A recommendation for policy and practice is for principals to become familiar with the six transformational leadership dimensions and the three teacher efficacy factors. Understanding these concepts and their dynamics can assist principals in making decisions regarding student improvement and instructional practices and can help shape school culture to create conducive educational climates that may positively affect student achievement. As principals are held accountable for the academic progress and failure of all student learners it is recommended that principals have a working knowledge of which transformational leadership dimensions and teacher efficacy factors have the most influence on student academic outcomes, thus assisting principals in strategic planning and with developing specific programs.

The findings of this research also have implications for school district leaders. It is recommended that school district leaders become familiar with the transformational leadership concept and the impact that it has on teacher efficacy and student achievement. This form of educational leadership may aid school districts in their attempts to raise assessment scores and improve overall student achievement. School districts may also benefit from this style of leadership used by their principals to help recruit and maintain effective teachers. According to Stronge et al. (2008), supporting teachers' commitment to their job through effective transformational school leadership is one strategy that principals can employ to reduce undesirable teacher turnover and attrition. Ross and Gray (2006b) stated that "teachers in schools characterized by transformational principal behaviors are more likely than teachers in other schools to express satisfaction with their

principal, report that they exert extra effort, and be more committed to the organization and to improving it” (p. 798). Significant relationships exist between transformational leadership dimensions, teacher efficacy and student achievement that can assist school districts that are experiencing the challenges and issues brought on by educational reform.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations for future research should be considered for expanding or conducting similar studies in the area of principal leadership, teacher efficacy and student achievement:

1. This study should be replicated and expanded to include a qualitative component. Principal and teacher interviews may provide additional information regarding perceptions and practices.
2. This study should be replicated and expanded to allow principals the opportunity to self-assess their leadership practices and compare the analysis to the teachers’ perceptions.
3. This study should be expanded to include principals and teachers at the elementary and high school levels. Research methods should be used that will allow the data from the different levels to be compared and contrasted.
4. Future research should include a larger sample size. More data may yield different results and allow for more generalization.
5. This study should be replicated and expanded to include various subgroups including: special education, English language learners, economically disadvantaged and subgroups identified by ethnicity.

6. Future research should explore the effect that the principals' gender, level of education, experience and ethnicity may have on teachers perceptions, teacher efficacy and student achievement.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship that exists between middle school teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational school leadership practices, teacher efficacy and student achievement. The study also conducted analyses to determine which transformational school leadership dimensions were predictors for the teacher sense of efficacy factors and student achievement as measured by math and reading/English language arts CRCT scores. Analyses were also conducted to determine which teacher sense of efficacy factors were predictors for student achievement as measured by math and reading/English language arts CRCT scores.

Data from 256 teacher surveys were collected from 17 middle schools located in a northwestern suburban school district in a southeastern state. Descriptive research methods were used to make generalizations about a selected population by examining a sample of that population. Descriptive and statistical analysis indicated that teachers perceived high performance expectations as the most important transformational leadership dimension. A Pearson's correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between the six transformational leadership dimensions and each of the three teacher sense of efficacy factors. The results the analysis indicated that individualized support with efficacy for classroom management yielded the highest correlation. All correlations indicated a statistical significance, but reported weak relationships between the variables. This finding is supported by the research of Ross and Gray (2006b) which

stated that transformational school leadership practices appear to have the greatest influence on teacher efficacy.

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to address the three research questions and to test the null hypotheses. The results of the regression models reported correlations between the predictor variables and the outcome variables. Individualized support emerged as the best predictor for efficacy for classroom management. Vision emerged as the best predictor for the math CRCT scores and vision and group goals emerged as the best predictor for the reading/English language arts CRCT scores. Efficacy for classroom management emerged as the best predictor for math and reading/English language arts CRCT scores. These findings are consistent with the research of Marzano et al. (2005) who contend that school level leadership has a direct influence on student achievement. However, these findings are not consistent with the research of Ross and Gray (2006a; 2006b) who found that school principals' leadership practices do not have a direct influence on student achievement.

Regardless of this study's limitations, recommendations for future research and policy and practice were made. Recommendations for policy and practice include principals and school district leaders becoming familiar with the six transformational leadership dimensions and the three teacher efficacy factors to assist in decision making practices regarding overall student academic improvement and instructional practices. Six recommendations for future research were made which include expanding the study to include a qualitative component, expanding the study to include principals and teachers at the elementary and high school levels, including a larger sample size, expanding the study to include various subgroups and expanding the study to explore the

effect that principals' gender, level of education, experience and ethnicity may have on teachers perceptions, teacher efficacy and student achievement.

APPENDIX A

SCHOOL DISTRICT'S PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE STUDY



SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 1088

Telephone: ()

A Community With A Passion for Learning

February 16, 2012

Mr. Antwane L. Nelson
1537 Ember Oaks Circle
Powder Springs, GA 30127

Dear Mr. Nelson:

Your research project titled, *The Relationship between Middle School Teachers's Perceptions of Principal's Transformational Leadership Practices, Teacher's Sense of Efficacy and Student Achievement*, has been approved. Listed below are the schools where approval to conduct the research is complete. Please work with the school administrator to schedule administration of instruments or conduct interviews.

[REDACTED] Middle School
[REDACTED] Middle School
[REDACTED] Middle School
[REDACTED] Middle School
[REDACTED] Middle School
[REDACTED] Middle School
[REDACTED] Middle School
[REDACTED] Middle School
[REDACTED] Middle School
[REDACTED] Middle School
[REDACTED] Grade Academy
[REDACTED] Middle School
[REDACTED] Middle School
[REDACTED] Middle School
[REDACTED] Middle School
[REDACTED] Middle School
[REDACTED] Middle School

Should modifications or changes in research procedures become necessary during the research project, changes must be submitted in writing to the Academic Division prior to implementation. At the conclusion of your research project, you are expected to submit a copy of your results to this office. Results cannot reference the [REDACTED] School District or any District schools or departments.

Research files are not considered complete until results are received. If you have any questions regarding the process, contact our office at [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

Dr. [REDACTED]
Chief Academic Officer

BOARD OF EDUCATION

SUPERINTENDENT

APPENDIX B

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD PERMISSION



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Phone: 601.266.6820 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | www.usm.edu/irb

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months. Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: **11102603**

PROJECT TITLE: **The Relationship between Middle School Teachers' Perceptions of Principals' Transformational Leadership Practices, Teachers' Sense of Efficacy and Student Achievement**

PROJECT TYPE: **Dissertation**

RESEARCHER/S: **Antwane L. Nelson**

COLLEGE/DIVISION: **College of Education Psychology**

DEPARTMENT: **Educational Leadership & School Counseling**

FUNDING AGENCY: **N/A**

IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: **Expedited Review Approval**

PERIOD OF PROJECT APPROVAL: **02/16/2012 to 02/15/2013**

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.

Institutional Review Board Chair

APPENDIX C

EMAIL INVITATION/REQUEST TO PRINCIPALS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE
RESEARCH STUDY

Good afternoon Principal,

My name is Antwane Nelson and I am writing to request your assistance. I am an assistant principal in the school district and a Ph. D. candidate at The University of Southern Mississippi. I am conducting a study to examine the relationship between middle school teachers' perceptions of principal's transformational leadership practices, teachers' sense of efficacy and student achievement. To my understanding the school district's Office of Accountability has forwarded a copy of my proposal to you for review. My application to conduct research in the district has been administratively approved, but in order to finalize the process I need your approval to have your school participate in the study. Your willingness to let your school and teachers participate anonymously in the study would be much appreciated. Please contact me at (678) 525-3961 or the number listed below or via email at antwane.nelson@cobbk12.org or antwanenelson@bellsouth.net and I will forward to you the school district's *Principal Agreement to Participate Form* to start the process.

Thank you in advance for your assistance, take great care.

APPENDIX D

INVITATION LETTER TO PRINCIPALS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH STUDY

(Date)

Dear Principal:

My name is Antwane Nelson and I am writing to request your assistance. I am currently a middle school assistant principal in the school district and a Ph.D. candidate at The University of Southern Mississippi. I am conducting a study to examine the relationship between middle school teacher's perceptions of principals' transformational leadership practices, teacher efficacy and student achievement. Part of the study involves teacher questionnaires in which your school and teachers are invited to participate.

In the wake of educational reform and the changes in educational policy, legislation like the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) has introduced austere accountability measures. These measures ultimately hold school principals and teachers accountable for improving student achievement. This study will look to see if there are any connections between principals' leadership practices and student achievement through teacher efficacy.

Enclosed you will find a principal and school demographic data form and research participant form. Completing the enclosed forms will show your willingness to allow your school and teachers to participate in this study. Please take a moment to complete the enclosed forms and return them to me using the addressed stamped envelope. After I have received your forms I will send or hand deliver the teacher materials to your school.

Please note that participation in this study is completely voluntary and I will ensure that the confidentiality of the school and anonymity of participating teachers is strenuously maintained. If you have questions please feel free to contact me at (678) 525-3961 or via email at antwane.nelson@cobbk12.org or antwanenelson@bellsouth.net.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration. The success of this study rests on the assistance from fellow administrators like you.

Sincerely,

Antwane Nelson

APPENDIX E

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT FORM

The University of Southern Mississippi
Department of Educational Leadership and School Counseling

Consent is hereby given to participate in the study titled: The Relationship Between Middle School Teachers' Perceptions of Principals' Transformational Leadership Practices, Teachers' Sense of Efficacy and Student Achievement

Purpose of Study: I understand that the purpose of this study is to explore the relationship that exists between middle school teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational school leadership practices, teacher efficacy and student achievement.

Description of Study: I understand that materials will be mailed to the middle school principals requesting permission for our participation in the study. A letter detailing the study will be included along with a principal and school demographic data form and research participant form. Once these materials have been returned to the researcher, survey materials will be mailed or hand delivered to the principal to be administered and will include a letter explaining the purpose of the study, a Principal Leadership Questionnaire and a Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale. These forms and surveys will take 15 to 20 minutes to complete. All materials will be picked up by the researcher or returned in the stamped envelopes. No names will be used in this study to ensure the anonymity of each participant. All surveys and demographic forms will be coded to ensure that the researcher can properly analyze the results.

Benefits: I understand that I will not gain any direct benefits from participating in this study. However information may be gained which may contribute in scholarly inquiry and development about the relationship between middle School teacher's perceptions of principals' transformational leadership practices, teachers' sense of efficacy and student achievement.

Risks: I understand that this study involves minimum risks and that the professional or personal risks to me in responding to the questionnaires are no greater than those normally encountered in my daily work duties.

Confidentiality: I understand that all data and results will be kept confidential. Results from the questionnaires will be coded so that names will not be used. I understand that my anonymity and the confidentiality of the school at which I work will be strenuously maintained.

Participant's Assurance: I understand that participation in this study is completely voluntary, and participants may withdraw from this study at anytime without penalty, prejudice, or loss of benefits. Whereas no assurance can be made concerning results that may be obtained the researcher will take every precaution consistent with best scientific practice. If I have any questions concerning the study, I can contact Antwane Nelson at (678) 525-3961. "This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820."

Research Participants Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX F

PRINCIPAL AND SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHIC DATA FORM

Principal and School Demographic Data Form

Please check your response to the following questions:

1. How many years (including this year) have you served as a principal, regardless of the grade level?

1 to 3 years ☐4 to 6 years ☐7 to 9 years ☐10 years or more ☐

2. How many years (including this year) have you served as the principal of this school?

1 to 3 years ☐4 to 6 years ☐7 to 9 years ☐10 years or more ☐

3. Which grade levels are included in your school?

6th ☐7th and 8th ☐6th, 7th, and 8th ☐

4. How many teachers do you have in your building? _____

APPENDIX G

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE DIRECTIONS

Completion Time

You will complete two questionnaires that have been designed to collect specific information, but they are considered one packet. The first questionnaire measures your perception of your principal's transformational leadership practices. The second questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the types of things that create difficulties for teachers in their school activities. Completion time for both questionnaires should be 15 to 20 minutes.

Responses

Please be candid in your responses to each question. Truthful responses give the groundwork for good solid research.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Please remember that the study will not use the name of schools or individuals. Only summative results will be reported, therefore individual schools or the participants will not be identified.

Demographic Questions

The questionnaire includes a few demographic questions. These questions are only for disaggregation of responses and will not be used in any way to identify individual participants.

Returning/Submitting Questionnaires

When you are complete please place your questionnaires, research participant consent form, and remaining materials in the designated receptacles. The school guidance counselor will collect all materials and prepare them to be picked up by the researcher or returned via mail in the provided envelope.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Antwane Nelson

APPENDIX H

INVITATION LETTER TO TEACHERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH
STUDY

(Date)

Dear Teachers:

My name is Antwane Nelson and I am writing to request your assistance. I am currently a middle school assistant principal in the school district and a Ph.D. candidate at The University of Southern Mississippi. I am conducting a study to examine the relationship between middle school teachers' perceptions of principals' transformational leadership practices, teacher efficacy and student achievement. Part of the study involves teacher questionnaires in which you are invited to participate.

Undoubtedly, teachers are the most important school resource and the connection to student achievement and research recognizes that teaching quality is the most dominant factor in determining student success and contends that effective teaching coupled with effective principal leadership practices can contribute to improving student performance. This study will look to see if there are any connections between principals' leadership practices and student achievement through teacher efficacy.

Your principal was contacted previously to inform him/her of this study and to get permission to allow teacher participation. The enclosed questionnaires should take 15 to 20 minutes to complete. Before completing the questionnaires please complete the research participant consent form and read through the teacher questionnaire directions then complete the questionnaires and return them as indicated in the directions.

Please note that participation in this study is completely voluntary and I will ensure that the confidentiality of the school and anonymity of participating teachers is strenuously maintained. No names will be used in this study and the code number on each questionnaire is for statistical analysis only and does not compromise your anonymity. If you have questions please feel free to contact me at (678) 525-3961 or via email at antwane.nelson@cobbk12.org or antwanenelson@bellsouth.net.

Thank you so much for your time, consideration and assistance.

Sincerely,

Antwane Nelson

APPENDIX I

TEACHER DEMOGRAPHIC DATA AND PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP
QUESTIONNAIRE

Please check your response to the following questions:

1. How many years (including this year) have you been an educator?

1 to 3 years ☐ 4 to 6 years ☐ 7 to 9 years ☐ 10 years or more ☐

2. How many years (including this year) have you been at this school?

1 to 3 years ☐ 4 to 6 years ☐ 7 to 9 years ☐ 10 years or more ☐

Principal Leadership Questionnaire

Please respond by considering how well each statement applies to your principal.

Please use the following scale:

1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Agree 4=Strongly Agree

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. My principal has both the capacity and the judgment to overcome most obstacles.	①	②	③	④
2. My principal commands respect from everyone on the faculty.	①	②	③	④
3. My principal excites faculty with visions of what we may be able to accomplish if we work together as a team.	①	②	③	④
4. My principal makes faculty members feel and act like leaders.	①	②	③	④
5. My principal gives the faculty a sense of overall purpose for its leadership role.	①	②	③	④
6. My principal leads by “doing” rather than simply by “telling”.	①	②	③	④
7. My principal symbolizes success and accomplishment within the profession of education.	①	②	③	④
8. My principal provides good models for faculty members to follow.	①	②	③	④
9. My principal provides for our participation in the process of developing school goals.	①	②	③	④
10. My principal encourages faculty members to work toward the same goals.	①	②	③	④

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 11. My principal uses problem solving with the faculty to generate school goals. | ① | ② | ③ | ④ |
| 12. My principal works toward whole faculty consensus in establishing priorities for school goals. | ① | ② | ③ | ④ |
| 13. My principal regularly encourages faculty members to evaluate our progress toward achievement of school goals. | ① | ② | ③ | ④ |
| 14. My principal provides for extended training to develop my knowledge and skills relevant to being a member of the school faculty. | ① | ② | ③ | ④ |
| 15. My principal provides the necessary resources to support my implementation of the school's program. | ① | ② | ③ | ④ |
| 16. My principal treats me as an individual with unique needs and expertise. | ① | ② | ③ | ④ |
| 17. My principal takes my opinion into consideration when initiating actions that affect my work. | ① | ② | ③ | ④ |
| 18. My principal behaves in a manner thoughtful of my personal needs. | ① | ② | ③ | ④ |
| 19. My principal challenges me to reexamine some basic assumptions I have about my work in the school. | ① | ② | ③ | ④ |
| 20. My principal stimulates me to think about what I am doing for the school's students. | ① | ② | ③ | ④ |
| 21. My principal provides information that helps me think of ways to implement the school's program. | ① | ② | ③ | ④ |
| 22. My principal insists on only the best performance from the school's faculty. | ① | ② | ③ | ④ |
| 23. My principal shows us that there are high expectations for the school's faculty as professionals. | ① | ② | ③ | ④ |
| 24. My principal does not settle for second best in the performance of our work as the school's faculty. | ① | ② | ③ | ④ |

APPENDIX J

TEACHERS' SENSE OF EFFICACY SCALE (SHORT FORM)

Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (short form)

Directions: This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for teachers in their school activities. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below using the scale below. Your answers are confidential.

How much can you do?

1=Nothing 3=Very Little 5=Some Influence
7=Quite a Bit 9=A Great Deal

Nothing Very Little Some Influence Quite a Bit A Great Deal

Teacher Beliefs

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom? | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ | ⑥ | ⑦ | ⑧ | ⑨ |
| 2. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work? | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ | ⑥ | ⑦ | ⑧ | ⑨ |
| 3. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work? | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ | ⑥ | ⑦ | ⑧ | ⑨ |
| 4. How much can you do to help your students value learning? | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ | ⑥ | ⑦ | ⑧ | ⑨ |
| 5. To what extent can you craft good questions for your students? | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ | ⑥ | ⑦ | ⑧ | ⑨ |
| 6. How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules? | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ | ⑥ | ⑦ | ⑧ | ⑨ |
| 7. How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy? | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ | ⑥ | ⑦ | ⑧ | ⑨ |
| 8. How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students? | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ | ⑥ | ⑦ | ⑧ | ⑨ |
| 9. How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies? | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ | ⑥ | ⑦ | ⑧ | ⑨ |
| 10. To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused? | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ | ⑥ | ⑦ | ⑧ | ⑨ |
| 11. How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school? | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ | ⑥ | ⑦ | ⑧ | ⑨ |
| 12. How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom? | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ | ⑥ | ⑦ | ⑧ | ⑨ |

Adapted from Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2001). Teacher Efficacy: Capturing an elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17, 783-805.

APPENDIX K

PERMISION TO USE THE PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE (PLQ)

1537 Ember Oaks Circle
Powder Springs, GA 30127

March 21, 2011

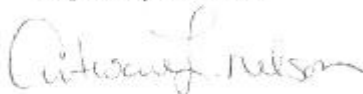
Kenneth Leithwood, Ph.D.
The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto
252 Bloor Street West
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1 V6

Dear Dr. Leithwood,

I am a doctoral student at the University of Southern Mississippi and I am currently involved in writing my dissertation proposal, which examines the transformational leadership and the relationship between principals' leadership practices and student achievement through teacher efficacy at title one middle schools. I am writing to request permission to use the Principal Leadership Questionnaire (PLQ), developed from a study by you and Dr. Jantzi, for my dissertation only. I have seen the instrument used in several dissertations and perceive it as a reliable tool. To gain additional knowledge about your instrument I would like to acquire a copy of the survey instrument and any information concerning scoring procedures/directions, reliability and validity.

I sincerely appreciate your consideration of my request to use your survey for my study. I ask that you sign your name and date below indicating your permission to use the Principal Leadership Questionnaire (PLQ) for my dissertation research. When convenient, please return a copy of this signed letter in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. If you have questions please feel free to contact me at 678-525-3961 or via e-mail at antwanenelson@bellsouth.net. Thank you so much for taking the time to consider my request.

Respectfully submitted,



Antwane L. Nelson

Name: _____



Date: _____



APPENDIX L

PERMISION TO USE THE TEACHER'S SENSE OF EFFICACY SCALE (TSES)

1537 Ember Oaks Circle
Powder Springs, GA 30127

March 21, 2011


Megan Tschannen-Moran, Ph.D
College of William and Mary
School of Education
P.O. Box 8795
Williamsburg, VA 23187-8795

Dear Dr. Tschannen-Moran,

I am a doctoral student at the University of Southern Mississippi and I am currently involved in writing my dissertation proposal, which examines the transformational leadership and the relationship between principals' leadership practices and student achievement through teacher efficacy at title one middle schools. I am writing to request permission to use the Teachers Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES), develop by you and Dr. Woolfolk Hoy, for my dissertation only. I have seen the instrument used in several dissertations and perceive it as a reliable tool. To gain additional knowledge about your instrument I would like to acquire a copy of the survey instrument and any information concerning scoring procedures/directions, reliability and validity.

I sincerely appreciate your consideration of my request to use your survey for my study. I ask that you sign your name and date below indicating your permission to use the Teachers Sense of Efficacy Scale for my dissertation research (TSES). When convenient, please return a copy of this signed letter in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. If you have questions please feel free to contact me at 678-525-3961 or via e-mail at antwanenelson@bellsouth.net. Thank you so much for taking the time to consider my request.

Respectfully submitted,



Antwan L. Nelson

Name:  Date: 4/11/11

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